

Police storm hijacked Saudi plane

NAIROBI (AP) — A man with a toy gun hijacked a Saudi Arabian jetliner with 139 passengers on Tuesday. The passengers were released, apparently unharmed, and Police then stormed the plane, injuring the hijacker and freeing the cockpit crew. Two women described as accomplices of the hijacker also were arrested, police Commissioner Shadrak Kiruki said. No other injuries were reported, he said. The hijacker, about 25, commandeered the plane after it took off from Jeddah late Monday. The plane, which belonged to Saudia, was headed for Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital. The hijacker was armed with a toy pistol, Mr. Kiruki said, "but there was no way of telling that." The plane landed in Nairobi and all passengers were allowed to leave. About 16 hours after the hijacking began, security forces stormed the plane and arrested the three, Mr. Kiruki said. Their names were not immediately available, but Mr. Kiruki said all three were from Ethiopia. The hijacker was taken to a military hospital. Mr. Kiruki said the three originally wanted to go to Rome, then changed their minds and demanded fuel to London.

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EU imposes arms embargo on Sudan

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Union (EU) on Tuesday imposed an arms embargo on Sudan in protest at bombings by the Sudanese air force and other human rights violations. EU foreign ministers decided without debate to impose the ban on shipments of arms, munitions and military equipment. EU officials said the measure was symbolic as EU countries had no arms trade with Sudan, whose 11-year-old civil war pits southern rebels against the northern government in Khartoum. The EU decision was announced without comment, but followed a statement two weeks ago condemning air force bombings which it said were harming the civilian population and causing a mass exodus of refugees to neighbouring countries.

Libyan claims spying for U.S. against Qadhafi

CAIRO (AP) — An army officer claimed on official Libyan television that he spied for the United States, collecting information on a controversial chemical plant and Libyan weapons programmes. The officer, who identified himself in the Monday night broadcast as Colonel Miftah Mohammad Garmar Al Wirfalli, said in addition to working with the Americans, he had links with exiled Libyan dissidents. He said he and two colleagues had been "asked to collect information about the Rabta plant, the extent of Libya's interest in nuclear research, its missile development programme, Col. Muammar Qadhafi's movements, the mood among the country's armed forces and the general situation inside Libya."

Militants kill two policemen in Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Suspected extremists shot and killed a policeman in southern Egypt on Tuesday, the second in as many days. Security officials said the policeman was ambushed in the Lella Khatoun neighbourhood of Assiut, a hotbed of extremism 320 kilometres south of Cairo. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. On Monday night, suspected extremists shot dead a policeman in the village of Darnak just outside Assiut, said the officials. The assailant escaped.

Armenia inaugurates Lebanon air link

BEIRUT (AP) — Armenia inaugurated Tuesday its first direct air flight to Lebanon, starting a weekly trip from Yerevan to Beirut. An official Armenian delegation arrived aboard a TU-154 Armenian Airlines jet with 120 passengers at Beirut airport at 1:30 p.m. (1130 GMT). Armenian Airlines Beirut manager, Pedros Ansanian, noted that many of the 120,000 Armenians living here have travelled between the two countries via Europe since Armenia gained independence in 1989.

Mercouri's body flown home for funeral

ATHENS (R) — The body of actress and Culture Minister Melina Mercouri returned home to a grief-stricken Greece on Tuesday for burial with full military honours. Mercouri, star of the 1960 film "Never on Sunday," died on Sunday at a New York hospital from complications after lung cancer surgery. The Olympic Airways jumbo jet that brought her remains to Athens was escorted by four Greek air force Phantom fighters. Thousands of Greeks packed the airport and cabinet colleagues met the plane.

Israeli army concedes Hebron mosque massacre could have been prevented

Generals testify before inquiry commission

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — The Israeli army acknowledged on Tuesday failing to provide adequate security that could have prevented the massacre of at least 60 Palestinians in a Hebron mosque. Major-General Danny Yatom, the army commander of the occupied West Bank, spoke at the start of a public inquiry into the slaughter by a Jewish settler of Muslims kneeling in prayer on Feb. 25. Gen. Yatom said five security men were missing from their posts when settler Baruch Goldstein entered the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron's Tomb of the Patriarchs with a sub-machinegun and fired about 110 bullets at 400 to 500 worshippers over 90 seconds before himself being killed by the crowd. "Five (men) were missing. The significance is that in the hall closest to where the incident took place there is only an officer in place of an officer and another five," Gen. Yatom told a five-member panel. "In retrospect my impression is the security plan (at the

tomb) provided a very good answer if it was executed... "I think in reality this plan could have prevented Goldstein's action, the massacre," Gen. Yatom said. "And at least if it did not prevent it, it would have made it very difficult for this murderer to carry out his plot." Gen. Yatom, head of the army's central command, defended the army's practice of allowing Jewish worshippers to bring automatic rifles into the Tomb of the Patriarchs, a site of frequent friction where Muslims and Jews pray side by side. Grilled by an Israeli Arab judge, Abdul Rahman Zoabi, on that point, Gen. Yatom said the army was geared towards thwarting attacks by Arabs against Israelis, not vice versa. He said intelligence updates given to the army did not address Jewish extremists. "Such an act by a madman is not something... we expected would happen at the Tomb of the Patriarchs or any other place," Gen. Yatom told the five-member commission in proceedings broadcast live to

the country. But Major General Dov Stelman, the army officer in charge of the tomb area, told the panel that before the Feb. 25 massacre, police had received dozens of complaints against Jews causing trouble in the tomb building. Most complaints were ignored, Gen. Stelman said. Gen. Yatom said he had not received intelligence warnings that Jewish extremists planned to attack Palestinians in order to derail peace talks. Still, a determined gunman could easily wreak havoc, he added. "A crazy Jew, if he wants to kill Arabs, God forbid, has every day many opportunities to do so," he said. In response to a question, Gen. Yatom confirmed that just hours before the massacre, soldiers stepped in to separate angry Muslims and Jews arguing over prayer rights and that the incident was not reported to army brass. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin later told Israel army

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Rabin has no plans now to remove Hebron settlers

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Tuesday he was not planning at present to remove the 400 Jewish settlers in the heart of Hebron where a settler killed at least 60 Palestinian worshippers. A parliamentary official quoted Mr. Rabin as having told the foreign affairs and defence committee the settlers' presence in the middle of some 110,000 Palestinians was "a time bomb."

Nearly half the ministers in the Israeli government favour removing the settlers from the city where settler Baruch Goldstein, from the neighbouring enclave of Kiryat Arba, carried out the massacre on Feb. 25. But the official, who attended the closed-door committee meeting, quoted Mr. Rabin as having said: "At this point there is no formal proposal. I do not intend to raise this kind of proposal." The official quoted Mr. Rabin as saying: "There is a harsh reality on the ground that is an unnecessary time

bomb. But I am not expressing an opinion for the moment as regards evacuation." "I have appealed to ministers not to come forward with radical proposals that will force the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) to be more Catholic than the Pope," Mr. Rabin said. The PLO has demanded the Hebron settlement be dismantled as one of its terms for resuming peace talks suspended over the mosque slaughter. "We are in the midst of negotiations and if public officials and ministers present these kinds of proposals, what will the PLO say?" Mr. Rabin was quoted as saying. 4 settlers arrested Israeli police said on Tuesday they had arrested four out of five leaders of anti-Arab groups wanted in a government crackdown on Jewish militants since the Hebron massacre. Police spokesman Eric Bar-Chen said they arrested Ben

Israeli soldiers kill 2 Palestinians in Gaza Strip

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli soldiers shot dead two Palestinians on Tuesday after one allegedly aimed a gun at a soldier at a checkpoint in the occupied Gaza Strip, reports said. The deaths raised to 30 the number of Palestinians killed by Israel since a Jewish settler gunned down at least 60 worshippers at a West Bank mosque on Feb. 25. The army said the two men were in a car with yellow licence plates issued to Israeli citizens when a soldier on guard duty at the Erez checkpoint between Gaza and Israel stopped them for an identity check. "The soldier asked them to state their names and show their ID cards. The wanted man pulled out an Uzi sub-machinegun and the soldier fired and killed two people," a statement added. A spokeswoman said three magazines and another 30 bullets were found inside the car. The army identified the wanted man as Ibrahim

Salameh, 22, an activist of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas from Khan Younis. He had been on the army's list of wanted people. It said the second man was a resident of Arab East Jerusalem but refused to give his name until his family had been notified. Hamas's Izzeddine Al Qassam Brigades, which killed most of the 31 Israelis slain in the past five months, has vowed to avenge the Hebron massacre. In a separate incident in Gaza, Palestinians said an Israeli police patrol fired at an Arab car in the Nuseirat refugee camp, wounding one passenger. The circumstances were not immediately clear. Hamas said Tuesday the targets for threatened suicide attacks will be the Israeli military and Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip in revenge for last week's massacre. Speaking a day after Hamas set a March 15 deadline for the evacuation of five Jewish set-

tlements in the occupied lands, a senior Hamas official also demanded an immediate Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories seized in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Mohammad Nazzal, the Jordan representative of Hamas, said: "Settlers must get out of the occupied territories and (Israel) must withdraw." Mr. Nazzal described the March 15 ultimatum, issued Monday by Izzeddine Al Qassam Brigades, as "a continuation of Palestinian resistance, especially after the massacre of Hebron." Hamas, a fierce opponent of the Sept. 13 Israeli-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) autonomy agreement, has seized the killings to press its campaign against wrecking any effort for a negotiated settlement with the Jewish state. The group advocates the elimination of Israel and the creation of a puritan Islamic state in its place. In an underground leaflet

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His Majesty King Hussein is seen off upon his departure for Saudi Arabia on Tuesday by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan (Petra photo)

King performs Umra pilgrimage

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

JEDDAH — His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday performed the Umra pilgrimage to Mecca on his first visit in nearly four years to Saudi Arabia where he was also expected to meet with King Fahd Ben Abdul Aziz, signalling a Jordanian-Saudi reconciliation. The official Jordanian media reported that the King, accompanied by several members of the royal family, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and a high-level delegation, performed Umra, but did not refer to the ex-

pected meeting of the two monarchs. But Jordanian officials and diplomatic sources have said that King Fahd had responded positively to the idea of such a meeting. The strain in ties resulted from differences in approach the two leaders adopted towards ending the Gulf crisis triggered by the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. King Fahd sought international help for a military solution to end the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait while King Hussein advocated a diplomatic solution and refused to join a U.S.-led military coalition, which, in February

1991, evicted Iraq from the emirate. Performing Umra along with King Hussein were Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad, Dr. Majali, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, the King's advisors Mohammad Rasoul Al Kilani, Yanal Hikmat, and Izzeddin Al Khatib, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ad Ben Zeid, Private Chamberlain Prince Ali Ben Nayef, the Hashemite family's imam Ahmad Hlayel, and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Abdul

Hafez Mira'i as well as several other members of the royal family and senior government and army officials. King Hussein was received upon his arrival by Prince Saud Ben Abdul Muhsen, governor of Jeddah, the Jordanian charge d'affaires in Jeddah and senior Saudi officials. The King was seen off upon departure by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, the King's advisors, senior government officials and the Saudi charge d'affaires in Amman.

U.N. council urged to vote soon on killings

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — The Arab and Islamic groups at the United Nations have decided to urge the Security Council to vote as soon as possible on a resolution condemning the massacre of Palestinians last month at a mosque in Hebron on the Israeli-occupied West Bank, diplomats said. The council held three public sessions last week on the Feb. 25 killing of at least 60 worshippers by an American-born settler who was a member of an extremist anti-Arab group. But negotiations, mainly between the United States and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), have so far failed to produce agreement on all elements of a text. The main differences have been over the scope of measures to ensure the security of Palestinians in the occupied territories, and the status of Jerusalem. Delegations comprising members of the Arab group and of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) were to ask Security Council President Jean-Bernard Merimee of France to reconvene the council to take a vote. Diplomats said this could

happen late Tuesday or Wednesday. The Hebron massacre prompted the PLO to refuse to continue peace talks with Israel unless steps were taken to protect the inhabitants of the occupied territories. The final text of the council resolution was uncertain since it has gone through numerous changes during negotiations and had not been formally submitted by Monday evening. But in addition to strongly condemning the Hebron killings, it was expected to call on Israel to implement measures aimed at preventing illegal acts of violence by Israeli settlers. It was also expected to call for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories, including a temporary international presence, but not an armed U.N. force, as the PLO had originally wanted. Asked how the United States would react to a resolution to which it still had some objections, a U.S. official would only say: "We are determined to do everything we can to ensure that Security Council action on this issue does not damage the Middle East peace process."

At the U.S. State Department deputy spokesman Christine Shelly said: "The resolution certainly remains very much on the council agenda and the negotiations are continuing... very actively. 'I'm not in a position today to get into details on the specific contents.' Nabil Shaath, a special PLO envoy, met last week with Secretary of State Warren Christopher and with the U.S. peace team headed by Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator for the Middle East peace process. Over the weekend, Mr. Christopher spoke by telephone with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Foreign Minister Amr Musa and with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Ms. Shelly said. Ms. Shelly emphasised there has been no change in the U.S. position on the question of the international monitors which Mr. Christopher spelled out in congressional testimony last week. The United States, she said, considers it a matter that should be viewed in the context of the Israeli-PLO declaration of principles which contains a provision regarding "the temporary international or foreign presence as agreed

on" by the parties. Asked to assess Israel's follow-up on pledges to curb militant settlers in the aftermath of the Hebron massacre, Ms. Shelly replied: "We made it clear when the tragedy occurred that it was our expectation that Prime Minister Rabin would carry out the commitment that the government of Israel made to curb the activities of the militant settlers and to improve security for the Palestinians. We think certainly it's very important that prompt and effective action be taken." At the same time, the deputy spokesman said it was not appropriate "to get into a kind of scorecard of specific measures" on the issue. "Clearly the overall issue of providing adequate security for Palestinians and for Israelis to work toward a peaceful resolution of their differences is extremely important, and we remain in very close consultation with the parties on the issue," she said. In Tunis, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat conferred Monday with a Russian presidential envoy.

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Israeli jets attack resistance positions

MARJAYOUN (Agencies) — Israeli warplanes blasted suspected bases of resistance forces in South Lebanon Tuesday in apparent retaliation for guerrilla attacks that killed nine Israeli affiliates a day earlier. Security sources said four fighter-bombers plunged from overcast skies to rocket the Mila bluffs in Iqlim Al Tufah in two sorties at 2:25 p.m. (1225 GMT). Israel's military command acknowledged the attack and said in a statement that the jets targeted the fundamentalist Hizbollah (Party of God). "The area attacked was under full control of the Hizbollah and the targets hit were used as launching points for training and attacks by the organisation," the Israeli statement said.

The strike was Israel's eighth in Lebanon this year. Smoke billowed over the bombed area. There was no immediate report of casualties in the air attack. Five minutes after the raid, Hizbollah traded artillery and mortar fire with Israeli and allied militiamen. Hizbollah lobbed mortar bombs at a post of Israel's South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia allies at Tallouseh on the edge of Israel's occupation zone in South Lebanon but no one was hurt. The Israelis and SLA fired back artillery. The raid came a day after Hizbollah and Palestinian guerrillas killed nine SLA militiamen and wounded 14 others in a wave of attacks against the 15-kilometre deep buffer enclave.

Arab MK urges Israeli pullout from Arab lands

QUNAITRA, Syria (Agencies) — A delegation of Israeli Arab leaders expressed horror Tuesday at the damage wreaked by Israeli troops in this town 20 years ago and called for Israel's withdrawal from occupied territories. "This is a criminal act by the Zionist movement committed for the sake of destruction," Israeli Member of Knesset (MK) Taleb Sanaa told the Associated Press. "Israel

should understand that such destructive measures give the other side the right to commit similar actions." Mr. Sanaa and the rest of the 58-member delegation, headed by Abdul Wahab Darawshe, also an MK, toured the ghostly streets of Qunaitra on a trip organised by the Foreign Ministry. The delegation, which includes politicians, academics, (Continued on page 5)

The Embassy of the Hellenic Republic in Amman informs with deepest regret and profound grief that Her Excellency the Minister of Culture Melina Mercouri, died on Sunday, March 6th, 1994 in New York. A register of condolences will be opened at the Ambassador's residence Wednesday 9th and Thursday 10th of March 1994 between 12:30 and 14:30

N. Yemeni officer says his soldiers prevent secession

SANAA (R) — The commander of a northern Yemeni brigade which fought southern troops last month said his unit was stopping the south from breaking away.

Colonel Ali Al Javifi, commander of the Amaliqah brigade, also accused troops of the former South Yemen of refusing to comply with orders from a joint military committee which is trying to disengage northern and southern forces.

His remarks were published on Monday by the weekly English-language Yemen Times. Amaliqah clashed with the southern Wahda (unity) Brigade in the southern province of Abyan on Feb. 21, only hours after a national reconciliation accord signed in Jordan by President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beedh.

The two men were respectively leaders of North and South Yemen before the two merged in 1990.

Col. Javifi told the Yemen Times that southern forces loyal to Mr. Beedh's Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) tried to dislodge Amaliqah from their southern base "because they have become an obstacle to the YSP's intention to declare separation from the Yemeni union."

This was the most serious and open charge by an army commander against the YSP since the fighting started, political sources said.

Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beedh entrusted a military committee with disengaging the forces, returning them to their original bases and organising the withdrawal of army units from former North-South Yemen border areas.

The committee included Yemeni, Jordanian and Omani military men and the U.S. and French military attaches in Sanaa.

But Col. Javifi said the southern forces refused "to comply with the orders of the military committee which seeks to disengage the forces. They got orders to return to their pre-Aug. 19 positions. They moved a few kilometres and stopped."

There was no immediate independent confirmation of the charge.

The crisis between Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beedh surfaced on Aug. 19.

A southern commander.

Colonel Salem Al Saidi of the pro-YSP popular militia forces in Abyan, told the Yemen Times that Amaliqah troops were setting checkpoints and blocking normal military ammunition and other supplies to southern forces.

He said the Amaliqah "want to continue to have the upper hand in the military balance." There have been no fresh reports on the activities of the joint military committee and political sources said it had apparently run into problems in separating forces in the Al-Bayda Mukayrus area, a district on the old North-South Yemen border where rival units face each other.

President Saleh vowed on Sunday to use all means to protect the unity of Yemen against attempts to destroy it.

Sanaa Television, reporting on Mr. Saleh's meeting with religious leaders and members of the judicial council, said he discussed "the ominous dangers threatening the unity of the country and the flare of civil sedition between its peoples."

"Unity belongs to all Yemenis," the television quoted Mr. Saleh as saying. "It is the destiny of our people and it will not be given up no matter what the price will be."

He added: "Our people will protect their unity by all means and will not allow anybody to threaten or endanger it."

He said efforts would continue to implement the peace accord he signed with Mr. Beedh in Jordan last month providing for political, economic, military and administrative reforms.

Mr. Saleh received a message from Sultan Qaboos of Oman on efforts to solve the political crisis in Yemen, Sanaa Radio said.

The message was conveyed by Oman's electricity minister, Mohammad Ben Ali Al Qutaibi, who attended the funeral of North Yemen's first president, Field Marshal Abdullah Al-Said.

Libyan Deputy Premier Mustafa Kharroubi also arrived in Sanaa to attend the funeral and hold talks with Yemeni leaders, the radio said.

Mr. Beedh said in a statement that his YSP had decided unilaterally "to stop as of Sunday acrimonious media exchanges out of respect for Salal's memory."

Life under Israeli guns

An Israeli army officer pushes the barrel of his gun against a Palestinian girl in Arab East Jerusalem on Tuesday during heavy clashes in the Holy City between Palestinian protesters and Israeli security forces following a march marking International Women's Day. At least two Palestinian men were shot and killed in the occupied West Bank town of Hebron, where protests continued against the Feb. 25 massacre of at least 60 Palestinians by a Jewish settler at the city's Ibrahim Mosque (AFP photo)



Kuwaitis with foreign husbands demand equal nationality rights

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwaiti women married to foreigners, complaining about Kuwait's strict nationality laws, on Tuesday, demanded that their children be granted Kuwaiti nationality and their husbands be allowed to work.

"Kuwaiti women who are married to non-Kuwaitis are still suffering difficult and inhuman circumstances and their children are still deprived of minimal human rights," the Women's Social and Cultural Society said in a statement.

The group said it was voicing the feelings of 8,000 mixed marriage families for whom work and immigration formalities have become more difficult since Kuwait's 1991 Gulf war liberation from Iraqi occupation.

The group urged the government and parliament to remove injustices it said were inflicted by "laws contradicting the constitution and international human rights pacts."

In Kuwait children take the father's nationality and non-Kuwaiti husbands cannot take Kuwaiti citizenship. The issue is critical in a country where citizenship confers employment, health and housing benefits and sometimes the right to vote.

The families' problems are snarled in lingering inter-Arab

tensions following Iraq's seven-month occupation in 1990-91.

Kuwait's relations have been strained with a number of Arab states and groups since they expressed sympathy for Iraq during its seven-month occupation of the emirate.

Many of the Women's husbands, mostly Yemenis, Sudanese, Iraqis, Palestinians, Jordanians and stateless Arabs, fled or were expelled during or after the Iraqi occupation and have not been allowed to return. Some of those who stayed have found it difficult to find work.

The women's statement listed seven demands:

— Facilitating employment for their husbands and sons, granting Kuwaiti nationality to children of Kuwaiti widows or divorcees who were married to non-Kuwaiti husbands, providing housing benefits for Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaiti husbands, allowing their children to apply for higher education institutions, free health care for their children, securing permanent residency for children and husbands; and allowing adults children to choose between the mother's or father's nationality.

Spy charge denied
A man accused by Iraq of

spying for Kuwait is neither a spy nor a Kuwaiti, newspapers reported on Tuesday.

The man, Sabah Sultan Mardhi, is a stateless Arab and a former sergeant in the Kuwait air force who left the emirate of his own free will after the 1991 Gulf war that ended Iraq's seven-month occupation, Al Anba newspaper reported.

Iraqi state television last week showed pictures of an alleged spy, who was not named, with instruments, documents and what the TV called fake identity papers with which he entered Iraq from Kuwait. The man is in detention in Iraq.

The television gave no details of his alleged spying, but official Iraqi newspapers said the Kuwaiti entered Iraq a year ago with instructions to carry out "terrorist and intelligence actions" inside Iraq.

Al Anba reported: "A source in the moral guidance (public relations department) of the Defence Ministry said that officer the Iraqi regime alleged was a Kuwaiti spy is called Sabah Sultan Mardhi, a stateless (Arab), and he had been working in the Kuwait air force and he left for Iraq directly after the liberation upon his own will."

U.S. assails Sudan stand on rights investigator

GENEVA (AP) — The United States on Monday condemned Sudanese threats against a human rights investigator as a "flagrant abuse" of the very foundations of the United Nations.

In a campaign likened by some diplomats to Iran's sentence of death against British author Salman Rushdie, Sudan has attacked a report by U.N.-appointed expert Gaspar Biro as blasphemous and accused him of being an enemy of Islam.

"The United States condemns the threats the Sudanese government has levelled at the special rapporteur," Geraldine Ferraro, chief U.S. delegate, told the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

"Such treatment constitutes a flagrant abuse of the principles which are the very foundations of the United Nations," Ms. Ferraro said.

Ironically, Sudan is currently a member of the 53-nation commission, the U.N.'s top human rights watchdog.

In a wide-ranging speech to the commission, Ms. Ferraro also criticised gross violations in former Yugoslavia, Iran, Burma, Cuba, Zaire and China.

Despite long-standing allegations of human rights abuses in Tibet and the suppression of the pro-democracy movement, China is once again expected to escape formal criticism by the commission, which wraps up its six-week annual session this week.

Sudan is likely to be condemned. Mr. Biro's report accused the government of widespread executions and torture in "ghost houses" in northern Sudan and deliberate bombing of civilian targets in war-shattered southern parts.

Mr. Biro, a Hungarian lawyer, also charged that provisions in Sudan's criminal code on the death penalty, floggings and amputations, based on Islamic law, violated international conventions to which Sudan is party.

The government slammed these paragraphs as being "satanic" and demanded that Mr. Biro "be brought to justice" by the United Nations.

A prayer leader in Sudan has described the U.N. report as even more blasphemous than Mr. Rushdie's book "The Satanic Verses." A parliamentarian demanded a "fatwa" or religious dictum authorising Muslims to slay Mr. Biro, similar to the Iranian order hanging over Mr. Rushdie's head.

Spain probes reports of Kuwaiti payoffs for war

MADRID (AP) — The Spanish government has announced that it would investigate charges that the Kuwait Investment Office (KIO) paid hundreds of millions of dollars to Spanish politicians and others to win their support in the Gulf war.

The allegations, which have surfaced periodically since last summer, have in the past been denied by Kuwaiti officials and some former managers at KIO's bankrupt Spanish subsidiary, Grupo Torras.

"The government has the strongest interest in the rapid and complete clarification of the facts referred to in these reports," government spokesman Miguel Gil told journalists.

The attorney general's office will carry out the investigation, Mr. Gil said.

The government's announcement came on the heels of fresh allegations published this weekend by Spain's leading daily, El Pais.

The newspaper, citing an anonymous former Grupo Torras Executive, said KIO — the investment arm of the Kuwaiti government — paid \$300 million to unnamed politicians, institutions and others as the oil-rich emirate sought international help in expelling Iraqi troops who had invaded in 1990.

Although it never publicly acknowledged its role, the Spanish government supported the international alliance that formed to oppose Iraq and allowed allied bombers to use Spanish bases when launching attacks on Iraqi positions.

El Pais also alleged that KIO officials had transferred \$70 million in Grupo Torras funds into their own personal accounts in England and Switzerland. El Pais said several KIO and Grupo Torras executives benefited from the alleged transfers, but named only two of them: Sheikh Fahad Mohammed Al Sabah, the former KIO chairman, and Fuad Jaffar, a former KIO vice president.

The newspaper carried no comment from either man and said its information came from anonymous British court sources. KIO is seeking \$500 million in damages from former Grupo Torras executives in a lawsuit filed in London.

El Pais said British authorities had frozen bank accounts owned by Mr. Jaffar and Mr. Sabah, a cousin of Kuwait's emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah.

KIO officials in London refused to comment Monday on the Spanish investigation or the El Pais reports.

The allegations of war-related payoffs first surfaced last July when the financial Times of London reported that Kuwait used the money to buy votes in the United Nations.

At the time, Kuwait Finance Minister Nasser Al Rowdhan denied the reports and said the charges were "low attempts by those who embezzled public money to justify what they did."

Grupo Torras, which had a variety of Spanish holdings in real estate, chemicals, food and other sectors, suspended payments in December 1992 with losses of \$1.6 billion over two years. KIO officials alleged the bankruptcy was caused by mismanagement and embezzlement by Grupo Torras executives.

One of the key figures in Grupo Torras, Javier de la Rosa, told Spanish news media this weekend that there had been no political payoffs, but that company funds had been transferred outside of Spain on orders from KIO officials at its London headquarters.

In September, however, Mr. De La Rosa gave the New York Times a different account.

"During the Gulf war I am aware of the transfer of about \$300 million that was made from the Torras group in order to make political payments to gain support for the war effort," he told the newspaper.

"But again, I was merely acting on instructions from London."

Kuwait denies report

Kuwait on Tuesday denied the allegations it made illegal payments from state investment holdings in Spain.

"We can only repeat again that the government of Kuwait did not request or authorise any payments of that nature," a senior Kuwaiti official said.

"We would welcome any investigation, as we have said many times previously. We would really welcome an investigation."

U.N. expects deal on Cyprus confidence steps

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders should be able to bring indirect talks on a package of confidence-building measures to a successful conclusion within a few weeks, Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said Monday.

"Agreement will represent the most important development on the island in two decades and will open a new and more positive vista for the future," he said in a report to the Security Council.

"On the other hand, the consequences of failure will certainly be very negative," he cautioned.

Cyprus has been virtually partitioned since 1974, when troops from Turkey landed in the north of the island after a short-lived coup in Nicosia engineered by the military junta then ruling Greece.

The United Nations has been trying for years to reunite the island under a federal system. But as an interim measure it has proposed a series of steps designed to build confidence between the two estranged communities.

The most important of these would involve reopening, under U.N. administration, Nicosia's airport and the deserted, Greek Cypriot-owned resort of Varosha, in the Turkish Cypriot-controlled part of the island.

Referring to President Glafcos Clerides, who heads the Greek Cypriot community, and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş, Dr. Ghali wrote:

"It is positive that the leaders of the two communities in 'Cyprus have accepted in principle the package of confidence-building measures and that they have begun intensive discussions in Nicosia with my representatives on the basis of agreed arrangements' to work out means of implementing the package.

For the package to achieve its purpose, 'the current proximity talks cannot be drawn out,' he added, alluding to separate meetings that each leader has been holding with the U.N. special envoy, former Canadian Foreign Minister Joe Clark, and his deputy, Gustave Feissel.

"Given the necessary good will, it ought to be possible for the two leaders to bring the proximity talks to a positive conclusion within a few weeks," Dr. Ghali said.

Trigger-happy Israeli troops squeeze peace talks

By John West
Reuters

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

Not a riot shield, water cannon or even helmet was to be seen in the West Bank town of Hebron this week. Just bare-headed soldiers firing live bullets at unarmed Palestinian stone-throwers — with deadly effect.

Six years after the Palestinian uprising began, Israel's army is still unwilling or unable to apply basic crowd control techniques that would minimise Arab casualties.

This was a human rights issue until last September. But since Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) became peace partners, and particularly since the occupied territories erupted in rage at the Hebron massacre on Feb. 25, it has become strategic.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is now trying to keep the lid on the surging unrest at the same time as coaxing the PLO back to the negotiating table.

But as politicians talked, at least 30 Palestinians were killed

and hundreds wounded in clashes, according to hospital and human rights group sources. PLO leaders put army behaviour on the list of issues it wanted addressed before it resumes talks.

"We'd like not only settler violence ended but also the brutality of the Israeli army," said negotiator Nabil Shaath after meetings in the United States and Norway about restarting talks.

In Gaza, local Fatah leader Suifan Abu Zeid said officials had asked the army to tone down their tactics but to no avail.

"We try to persuade our people the peace process is worthwhile. Every new martyr makes that more difficult," he said.

"The normal Israeli soldier lives in a state of fear which makes him quick to open fire. But more important is the policy of the army leadership which allows this," added Mr. Abu Zeid.

"The Israeli human rights group B'tselem this week blasted the army, which poured reinforcements into the territories, for 'introduc-

ing troops who are not trained, equipped and practised in crowd dispersal using non-lethal measures."

B'tselem studied 12 of the deaths closely and concluded in none of the cases were soldiers' lives in danger, a condition for opening fire on protesters. It said 11 of the 12 were shot in the upper body or head with live ammunition.

The army confirmed 11 Palestinians killed since the massacre, a spokesman said. Five Israeli soldiers were reported injured.

ANALYSIS

"This is a military not a police presence. We use tear-gas and rubber bullets but other crowd control measures have been proved to be ineffective," one military source said.

Nervous soldiers in Hebron last week, wearing ordinary military fatigues, often shot at stone-throwers as their only form of protection.

Policing duties in the West Bank and Gaza have never been popular with army com-

manders, who see their prime job as keeping Israel's armed forces ready for war, not civil unrest.

Since the peace agreement, Israel has started to put more border police units with some degree of crowd control experience into the territories. But regular army units still make up the bulk of forces there and is still the army ethos which rules.

Army handling of Palestinian stone-throwers last week differed sharply from the way Israeli police handled similar riots by Israeli Arab citizens inside the Jewish state. Police used water cannons and truncheons rather than bullets to break up protests.

"The army over the last seven years has fought the notion philosophically of any concessions which would turn them into a police force. You won't find anyone among Israel's strategic thinkers who is happy with the idea of crowd control," said Joseph Alpher, head of the Jaffee Strategic Studies Centre.

Political priorities close off some security options and are one cause of the high casualty

rate.

The Rabin government is trying to make peace with the PLO on the basis of limited self-rule, rejecting a Palestinian state.

But the PLO is under intense pressure to abandon talks without wholesale political concessions from Israel. Palestinians in the territories are seething under the strictest curfew in years.

Both Palestinians and Israelis predict more unrest for weeks to come, and even a return to levels of street protests not seen since the peak of the Palestinian uprising. How the army handles that could tip the critical balance of the peace process.

But Palestinians talk of another big barrier as psychological. They say the old Israeli view of Palestinian, as hostile aliens who must be subdued by a show of force, has yet to be changed, especially in military circles, by the peace process.

"They should have changed their mentality with peace but they have not," said Mr. Abu Zeid. "They are still conquerors."

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 N.B.A. Sport
18:00 News in French
19:15 Le Journal De L'Histoire
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
21:30 Too Close for Comfort
22:50 News in English
23:20 Documentary: "The Carol World"

PRAYER TIMES

04:37 Fair
05:45 (Sunrise) Duha
11:47 Dhuhur
15:05 'Asr
17:29 Maghrib
18:55 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetlach, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 627285
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assiout International Church Tel. 625256
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 623238
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 694195
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be relatively cold and partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers, while winds will be south-westerly light to moderate. In Aqaba, partly cloudy weather conditions will prevail, while winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. Temp.

Amman 3 / 15
Aqaba 10 / 24
Deserts 2 / 16
Jordan Valley 8 / 20

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 17, Aqaba 22. Humidity readings: Amman 43 per cent, Aqaba 25 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Hanna Mansour 750197
Dr. Nidal As'ad 751672
Dr. Riaz Abu Zina 894295
Dr. Muhammad Al Ghoul 780730
First pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 649455
Shmeis pharmacy 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Al Al Omari 773032
Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Fawaz Hamdallah 905644
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musharraf Hospital 6672770
The Islamic, Abdali 66612737
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Isailan, Al-Muhajreen 7771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77511126
Army Hospital 89161115
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)905560
Ibn Al-Nafies Hospital (09)983732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)989090
IBBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272775
Ibn Al-Nafies Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

COMPANY

RJ Flight Information 636381
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53300

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381332
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 6442816
Akchh Maternity, J. Amn. 6424412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 6641714
Shmeisani Hospital 845845
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musharraf Hospital 6672770
The Islamic, Abdali 66612737
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Isailan, Al-Muhajreen 7771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77511126
Army Hospital 89161115
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
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IBBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272775
Ibn Al-Nafies Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
08:00 Aqaba (RJ)
08:55 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:00 Jeddah (RJ)
09:15 Laraka (RJ)
15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:35 London (RJ)
16:50 Istanbul (RJ)
17:25 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
18:00 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
18:10 Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
18:30 Rome (RJ)
23:10 Aqaba (RJ)
23:45 Cairo (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
08:55 Rome (RJ)
09:35 Cairo (RJ)
10:30 Jeddah (RJ)
10:30 Sanaa (RJ)
12:35 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
14:35 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PF)
18:15 Paris, Damascus (AF)
19:45 Beirut (ME)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:30 Aqaba (RJ)
10:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
10:30 Berlin, London (RJ)
11:00 Istanbul (RJ)
11:10 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
15:30 Colombo (RJ)
19:45 Cairo (RJ)
20:00 Riyadh (RJ)
20:20 New Delhi (RJ)
20:30 Aden (RJ)
20:45 Aqaba (RJ)
21:30 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
22



QUEEN NOOR HOSTS IFTAR: Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday receives her guests at an iftar for the wives of Arab and Muslim diplomats at Raghadan Palace. Attending the banquet were Their Royal Highnesses Princesses Sarvath, Alsha and Rania, Mrs. Abdul Salam Majali, Mrs. Marwan Qassem and Mrs. In'am Mufli. The guests also included the wives of heads of international organisations, women activities and members of professional unions (Photo by George Crystal)

Government works on revising agricultural sector — Gammoh

AMMAN (Petra) — One day before a threatened strike by Jordan Valley farmers, Minister of Finance Sami Gammoh said the government was conducting a comprehensive revision of the agricultural sector in order to tackle impediments to production and marketing.

The revision is being conducted with the help of a Canadian firm, and the results will be announced soon, said the minister.

Mr. Gammoh was speaking at a meeting with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and members of the Lower House of Parliament Finance Committee.

Jordan Valley farmers Sunday had said they would strike to urge the government to help them market their products locally and abroad at reasonable rates and to press for a reassessment of the country's agricultural policies.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Crown Prince attends officer's iftar

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Monday attended an iftar hosted by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Abdul Hafez Mirai Al Kasabeh for army officers at the Officers' Club in Zarqa. Prince Hassan conveyed to those present at the Banquet the greetings of His Majesty King Hussein and briefed them on the latest international and regional developments. The Crown Prince stressed the importance of defending the Constitution and safeguarding the Kingdom, pointing to the value of sound planning in developing the society. Prince Hassan and the officers performed Al Maghreb prayers together.

Princess Basma supervises distribution of aid

JORDAN VALLEY (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Tuesday supervised the distribution of in-kind contributions to 800 families in 21 population centres in the central Jordan Valley and donated JD 3,000 to the charitable society there. Princess Basma toured Fannoush, Maysarah and the southern Tawal region, where she met with heads of village councils and representatives of the youth and women's sector.

18 women to be honoured

AMMAN (Petra) — Under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, the General Federation of Jordanian Women Thursday will hold a special ceremony at the Royal Cultural Centre to mark International Women's Day which fell Tuesday, according to the federation's president, Haifa Abu Ghazaleh. During the celebration 18 pioneers of voluntary work will be honoured.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ "Installation" inspired by Azraq by artist Andreja Kuluncic at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh (7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.). Also showing "permanent" exhibition of 54 contemporary Arab artists (Tel. 643251/2).
- ★ Art exhibition by artists Widad Al Orfali and Abdul Hussein Twalji at the Orfali Art Gallery in Um Uthaina (Tel. 826932).
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Ghassan Ayyasrah at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Plastic art exhibition by several artists at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of Jordanian products at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of works of art by the Arab Centre for Vocational Training at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Jalal Arikat at Ab'ad Art Gallery (10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. except Fridays).
- ★ Art exhibition by Iraqi artist Fadel Mahmoud at the Alla Art Gallery (8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.).
- ★ Exhibition of medical herbs at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre (7:00 p.m.-midnight).
- ★ Art exhibition by Jordanian artists at the Royal Cultural Centre (7:00 p.m.-midnight).
- ★ Wood carving exhibition by artist Samer Ousama at the French Cultural Centre.

CHARITY BAZAAR

- ★ Charity bazaar displaying stationery, artificial flowers, handicrafts, and clothes at the clinics compound of the Jordan University Hospital (10:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.).

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

- ★ Musical performance by the National Institute of Music at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:30 p.m.

POETRY RECITAL

- ★ Poetry recital by Dr. Werner Wagner of poems by German poets Holderlin, Eichendorff, Heine, and Morike at the Goethe-Institut at 8:00 p.m.

Man arrested for burglaries in W. Amman

Stolen cache put on display for retrieval by owners

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police Tuesday arrested a man in the act of burglarising a home in the West Amman area, according to Amman Police Chief Brigadier General Abdullah Hababbeh.

According to Brig. Hababbeh, the suspect (31) was arrested in the pre-dawn hours while exiting a house he had just burglarised.

The official told the Jordan Times police were alerted by neighbours that a burglary was in progress next door. A nearby police unit responded to the call and apprehended the suspect.

Police said the man, identified as J.A.K., a father of three, confessed to the crime. The suspect also admitted committing similar burglaries in the past, said the police chief.

A search of the suspect's home in Sweileh revealed a large amount of stolen goods, including jewellery, watches, cameras, stereos, foreign currency and coin collections, said Brig. Hababbeh.

According to the official, the suspect had a police record involving several burglaries.

The official said, the suspect had sold some of the stolen items, and the authorities collected what remained and have called the burglary

victims to report to the Amman Police Department in Abdali to identify and retrieve their belongings.

Mr. Hababbeh called on the public to exert caution in protecting their valuables, particularly when they plan to be away from home. He added that citizens should alert their local police departments of any suspicious activities in their neighbourhoods.

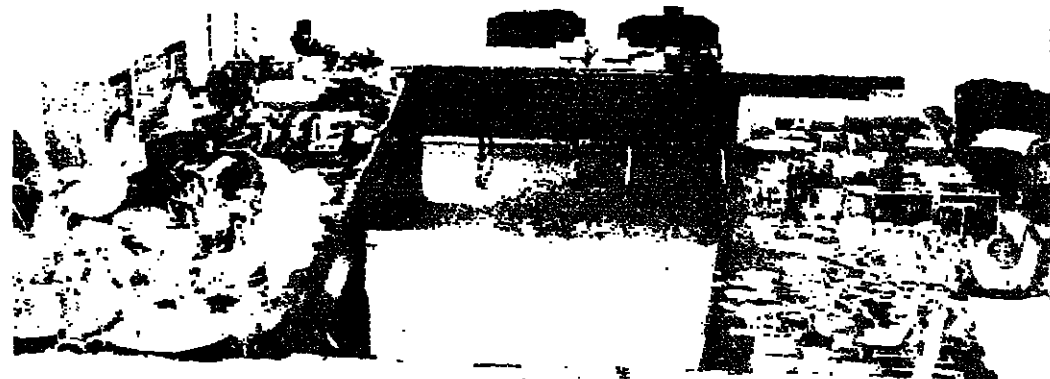
Police search for reckless driver

Madaba police are searching for a man in his mid-30s who Monday evening refused to stop for a patrol, struck another traffic official about a few kilometres beyond the patrol, then crashed into an electricity pole and fled the scene on foot, a police report said.

The report said the patrol officers signalled for the driver of a gold BMW to pull over because the car he was driving bore no tags. But the driver sped up and passed the patrol, according to the report.

Police units in the area were alerted to look out for the suspect, who they described as driving recklessly.

A traffic official on motorcycle caught up with the suspect and signalled for him to pull over. Instead the suspect swerved his vehicle, striking the officer.



Items retrieved from several burglaries committed in the West Amman area are put on display at the Amman Police Department. A Abdali for identification and claim by burglary victims

According to the report, when the suspect approached the Zizia area, he lost control of his vehicle and struck an electricity pole. When the police chase car arrived at the scene of the accident, the suspect had disappeared.

Police searched the car and found a passport and some documents. They said the

passport was registered to a man with the initials F.T.F. and a customs statement registered to an individual with the initials F.K.D.

The report said the injured traffic official was listed in good condition.

Police said they have good description of the suspect and are continuing their search.

Also Monday a police car patrol chased and apprehended a car thief in his mid-20s, a police official told the Jordan Times.

According to the official, the suspect confessed to stealing 14 other cars, all Mercedes.

He told police he stole the cars for joy rides

IAF repeats demand for release of movie-house blast suspects

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Islamic Action Front (IAF) deputies have reiterated their demand for the release of unconvicted Islamist activists arrested last month in connection with explosions in Amman and Zarqa movie theatres.

"We demand the release of those who were not convicted," before the fall of Eid Al Fitr at the beginning of next week, IAF parliamentary bloc spokesman Hamzeh Mansour said Tuesday.

Nine people were injured in last month's blasts at the Rivoli theatre in Amman and Salwa movie theatre in Zarqa. Informal sources had earlier linked the arrested suspects to what they called "the Afghans," which is a group of Jordanian Islamist fundamentalists who took part in the Afghan Mujahideen war against the former Soviet Union.

IAF Deputy Bassam Omoush told the Jordan Times that the IAF lawmakers have

sent the government a memorandum in which they requested the release of the Islamist suspects but have received "no response yet."

Mr. Mansour said that "massive arrests" were made in connection with the explosions, and those not convicted should be released to ensure justice and freedom. He said he "fully" supported the "punishment" of individuals who are proven guilty of involvement in "the crime," but added that justice should be carried out towards those innocent of the charges brought against them.

A weekly tabloid Tuesday quoted IAF Deputy Mohammad Oweidah as saying that he had witnessed the arrest of the IAF secretariat "despite the fact that the arrest warrant did not have the secretariat's name on it."

Al Bilad weekly also quoted Mr. Oweidah as claiming that political parties were being "harassed by security forces" and that "democracy is being

crippled by these random arrests."

The tabloid quoted an unnamed senior member of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement as saying that Islamists were targets of "rumours and traps which are the making of our Jewish enemies, their agents and collaborators."

According to Al Bilad, the brotherhood official rejected accusations that the government was trying to "harm the Islamists' reputation."

"His Majesty King Hussein spent his life calling for Arab and Muslim unity. (The King's) awareness and political wisdom are enough reason for us not to believe" that the government is spreading rumours against the Islamists, the paper quoted the brotherhood leader as saying.

IAF deputies are awaiting the return of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali from his trip to Saudi Arabia to perform Umra, to "remind" the government of the issue, said Mr. Mansour.

4 Asian countries confirm 1.4m tonnes in phosphate imports from Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — Malaysia,

Indonesia, South Korea and Japan have confirmed that they are purchasing a total of 1.4 million tonnes of Jordanian phosphate during 1994, according to Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) Director General Sameh Madani.

Mr. Madani, who Tuesday returned to Amman from a tour of the Asian nations, said discussions with officials in the four countries covered prospects of increasing Jordan's phosphate exports.

He added that a study was conducted on these countries' actual needs of phosphate and ways to enable Jordan to compete with the other mineral-exporting nations.

Mr. Madani told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that he and the team accompanying him on the tour discussed JPMC's expansion projects, particularly at Shidieh mine in southern Jordan.

The JPMC had said that by the end of 1995, the Shidieh mines would produce as much as 2.7 million tonnes of phosphate annually.

The company last December published a statement in which it said the mines are being readied to produce up to 10 million tonnes of phosphate by the year 2000.

During the visit to Indonesia, said Mr. Madani, the team met with the minister of industry and briefed him on the company's operations.

Mr. Madani quoted the Indonesian minister as saying that his country was determined to cooperate with the JPMC.

Self-styled 'Palestinian provisional leadership' sends letter to Clinton

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A group of Palestinians, believed to be mainly returnees from Kuwait who have set up a self-styled "Palestinian government — provisional leadership council," has sent a message to U.S. President Bill Clinton disowning the PLO's Liberation Organisation (PLO) and calling on Washington to shift its stand away from the PLO in the quest for a Middle East peace settlement.

Palestinian observers and diplomats dismissed the group as insignificant. Some said they never heard of such a group and others said it did not represent any large number of Palestinians and did not enjoy grass-roots support.

The group, if indeed it has any membership that warrants such a description, appears to be one that first surfaced in

Jordan in late 1990, mainly represented by one man who used to describe himself as a Palestinian journalist who was forced out of Kuwait following the Iraqi invasion of the emirate.

The man, who gave varying names to different people, claimed that he represented "the sons of Palestine who enjoy grass-roots support in the occupied territories, particularly the West Bank."

"We will show our real strength when the time is right, and we will take over the leadership of the Palestinian people everywhere," the man has reportedly told news organisations before disappearing from view for some time.

According to some Palestinian sources, the man has supporters among a few of the Palestinian returnees from Kuwait who resented the PLO's sympathy for Iraq during the Gulf crisis. The PLO

stand, they argued, had led to their ouster from the emirate.

A copy of a letter from the group, addressed to "United States of America, Washington, White House, his kind attention his excellency the president of the United States Mr. Bill Clinton" (sic), was made available to the Jordan Times Tuesday.

The typed message was on a letterhead bearing the name "Palestinian government — provisional leadership council," and had an official-looking rubber stamp.

A recorded voice answered calls to a telephone number given in the letterhead.

No comment was immediately available from the U.S. embassy here, whether it had received a copy of the letter or how it was treating the purported group.

The undated letter said the PLO "doesn't represent the Palestinians under the occupa-

tion and immigrants all over the world," and that the Tunis-based organisation "represents only those who are employees and having orders and salaries from (Chairman Yasser) Arafat."

"We as Palestinians are very grateful to your administration, which collected financial aid to the occupied territories," said the letter, written in poor English, in an apparent reference to Washington's role in securing international pledges worth more than \$2.2 billion to support the Sept. 13 Israel-PLO accord.

The rambling letter, parts of which did not make much sense, said economic development of the occupied territories was not possible if it was "run by military mentality people," and suggested that an international conference be held in Jordan to elect "a temporary Palestinian administration to run the occupied

territories" with help from Jordan. The proposed administration should tackle the various aspects of the situation of the occupied territories, including economics, health, agriculture, education, public relations, industry and investment, it said.

According to the group, participants in the proposed administration should include Palestine, Jordan and unspecified "other areas" and "some persons" from the PLO in their capacity as independents.

A pre-qualification set by the group for anyone to take part in the proposed administration is "good behaviour" and a "behaviour certificate" from the country of residence.

It called for the establishment of a "Jordanian-Palestinian national bank for development" with 50 per cent of the equity for Jordan and Palestine and the rest for countries which have pledged aid.

The capital for the bank could come from the pledged funds and the institution will be run by a committee under the "supervision of your administration," the letter told President Clinton.

It also called for the establishment of a society "for old fighters" to be trained in civil administration and development and to "let them (old fighters) live a pure life by cleaning the military mentality that they (have) lived..."

It argued that "any Palestinian state couldn't act without a link with Jordan" and expressed "hope that matters (will) turn back to (pre-1967) June (as) a result of a survey (presumably a referendum)."

"Let the Jordanians and Palestinians give any name to the new unity," it said. "This unity will (preempt) establishing different administrations... the nature of partnership between (the) West and East Bank(s) of (the) Jordan River could be not separated..."

"Jordan has given opportunities for immigrants to take their chances to grow up educationally and financially," said the four-page letter. "People are fair will consider how much Jordan (spent) on such... matters..."

"If such a link takes place," said the letter, "the replacement of Jordan (as) Palestine will be completely" preempted.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

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MAHMOUD AL KAYED

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Means for right end

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Yitzhak Rabin is wrong in interpreting the PLO's requests for effective security for the Palestinians as tantamount to renegotiating the terms of the Oslo accord. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Arab application for ensuring the physical safety of the Palestinians under occupation has nothing to do with what has already been negotiated and agreed upon between Israel and the PLO. Israel is bound to provide security for the people it has been occupying since 1967 under the Fourth Geneva Convention. There are no ifs or buts about Israel's treaty obligations which go beyond and supersede the Oslo agreement. Israel cannot therefore claim that calls for the implementation of the provisions of that convention relative to occupied territories would be like reopening Pandora's box. Rabin has a choice between opting for sense, reason and legality in this context or viewing the legitimate demands as turning the clock back on PLO-Israeli agreements.

Had the reverse occurred and one or two Palestinian zealots opened fire on worshippers at a synagogue killing and injuring tens of Jews, there would be no doubt that the whole Israeli people would be up in arms calling for the suspension of the peace talks with the Palestinian side if not ending them altogether. Rabin would be first to announce that PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat has demonstrated once again that he has no control over his people, rendering negotiations with him useless. As a matter of fact, the wave of attacks by Hamas activists against Israelis was repeatedly cited as proof that the PLO was no longer a viable partner in the quest for peace even though Palestinian extremists are on the opposite side of Arafat's men on the validity of current negotiations between the Arabs and Israel.

Instead of regarding the legitimate calls for adequate security as an impediment for peace, the Israelis could see the Palestinian demand as a vital necessity sanctioned and called for by applicable international standards on top of which is the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. There is no worse option than suspending the peace process for too long henceforth. The momentum could be lost if the parties cannot find common grounds for restarting it. The ball is in Rabin's court since it was one of his people who blew up the fuse that generated the energy for the PLO-Israeli peace negotiations thus far. Arafat, on the other hand, cannot under the circumstances ignore the reasonable calls from his own constituency for true security. The Palestinian leader has to satisfy public opinion too, and moreover he has to be able to pull the rug from under the feet of Palestinian hardliners who never wanted a peace process in the region in the first place. Rabin can and should admit that demands for security for Palestinians do not go beyond Israel's international treaty obligations. And such an argument can easily be justified on political grounds too, leaving us all to continue with the peace effort right away.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THOSE WHO are waiting for the United Nations Security Council to pass a resolution condemning the Israeli crime in Hebron must wake up to the fact that such move would never come about because Washington does not want it, said Al Rai's daily Tuesday.

The other nations at the Council, including the other four permanent members, have no say in such matter and are influenced by the United States — the strategic ally of the Jewish state, said the paper. It was wrong in the first place to lodge a complaint with the United Nations, and it is up to the Arabs and, if not to the Palestinians, particularly, the relatives of the victims, to take revenge on the murderers, said the paper. The Arabs and Muslims should not expect any help in this regard from the world community and have to rely solely on themselves and take the matter into their own hands, it continued. The Arabs, said the paper, ought to realise that the massacre has not stirred the conscience of any leader in Moscow, Peking, Paris, London or Washington, nor has the suffering of the Iraqi people convinced any of them to end the embargo. "Therefore, said the paper, there is no alternative for the Arabs but to undertake a meaningful measure to deter the Israelis from committing further crimes.

By Charles Krauthammer

WASHINGTON — Americans really did not need a major spy scandal to tell them that the honeymoon with Russia was over. But the arrest of the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) Aldrich Ames makes the point with some finality.

There is no need to be scandalised by the Ames affair. Everyone spies. But there is a need to be sobered. Not everyone spies in the same way. That post-Soviet Russia should have continued to run the CIA's Soviet counterintelligence chief as a Russian mole helps clarify the nature of the U.S.-Russian relationship.

Yes, friendly countries do spy on each other. But Russia's spying on America (and vice versa) is of a different order than, say, reading France's E-mail. And were the French to discover some of the secrets to the United States, he would hardly be shot, as were agents Mr. Ames allegedly betrayed to Moscow.

That is the difference between peering in on friends and spying on rivals. The Ames episode helps define Russia clearly. It is not an ally. At best, it is a potential partner, though that is many years off. For now, it is a rival with diverging interests.

But not a mortal enemy. It is important to keep that distinction in mind against the alarmists who would point to Mr. Ames and have us believe that nothing has really changed since the cold war. Everything has changed.

The Soviet Union was a mortal enemy. Unrelentingly hostile because it defined its interests as intrinsically opposed to those of the West. It held deeply that there were two opposing camps in a world with only room for

M. KAHIL



U.S.-Russian relations set for a nosedive

one. All conflicts were thus zero-sum (with one exception: nuclear weapons, which had the potential to destroy both camps simultaneously).

Russia today is far different. It is ideologically hostile to the West. Properly speaking, it cannot be said to have any ideology at all. It does, however, have national interests. Some are compatible with America's, some are not. In Central Asia, for example, where the Soviets were meddling in the civil war in Tajikistan, Russian and

American interests coincide. Meddling in the Baltics and Ukraine, on the other hand, is not all right with America.

Dealing with Russia will require that U.S. officials grow up and adopt a nuanced view of Russian actions and intentions. Russia is a great power. It seeks a sphere of influence. Some of this seeking Americans do not like and will oppose. The result will be conflict.

The next major flash point

is Crimea, the formerly Russian province now part of Ukraine, which late last month voted overwhelmingly for a president pledged to Crimean independence and/or reunification with Russia. Ukraine does not take kindly to its coming dismemberment, just as Russia has never taken kindly to Ukrainian independence (from Moscow). A major conflict is brewing, possibly war, a war that would make the Bosnian conflict look tame. U.S. sym-

pathies and interests lie with Ukraine. A Crimean war, if not headed off by some compromise, threatens a serious U.S.-Russian confrontation.

Another flash point is Bosnia. Recently, things looked deceptively amicable. By getting the Serbs to acquiesce to NATO's Sarajevo ultimatum, Russia took the West off the hook. But the relief with which the Russian entry into Sarajevo was greeted in the United States was extraordinarily shortsighted. Americans were relieved of

the need to carry out the threat of air strikes. But the Russians are not in Sarajevo on America's behalf. They are there on behalf of the Serbs.

The Russian presence shields the Serbs from NATO attack. The United States is not about to drop bombs that could kill Russians.

While a ceasefire is an immediate relief to the Bosnian Muslims, it is a strategic gain for the Bosnian Serbs. A ceasefire in place is a Serbian objective, not a Muslim one. The Serbs would very much like an armistice that leaves them with the 72 per cent of Bosnia they hold today. It is the Muslims who want to fight on to regain lost territory.

The Russians have now intervened on the ground and at the peace table on behalf of the Serbs. America has taken up the cause of the Muslims. Two great powers, two conflicting interests. With the Sarajevo ultimatum, Americans and Russians enter upon a serious, potentially dangerous game of Balkan roulette.

"The period of market romanticism is now over," declared Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin upon assembling his reform-averse, apparatchik-heavy government in Moscow last month. But it is not just Russia's fling with market reform that is over. The diplomatic honeymoon with the West is over too.

The Ames affair did not cause the honeymoon's end. It only marks the end. It is a minor event. But it signals the truly major event playing out today in Bosnia, tomorrow in Crimea: two great powers, after a momentary embrace, going their own way.

The Washington Post.

On the brink of power

Italy's left likely to lose elections to opposition

By Ed Vulliamy

ITALY'S DEMOCRATIC Left Party is the heir to a mighty tradition of red-blooded radical politics, and is now the core of the broad opposition alliance aspiring to become Italy's next government.

The party is at the same time standard-bearer of a Communist legacy without parallel in Western Europe, and the pilot of what it hopes is a new form of social democracy which can triumph against the grain of modern European politics.

The party has attempted to modernise, polish and adapt itself to present the first serious challenge to the Italian power machine run by the corruption scandals.

Having dropped the word communist in 1991, along with the hammer and sickle, the party this week even dropped the word "left", in a manifesto hailed by its paper *L'Unita* as being "for a government not of the left, but of reconstruction."

With its new programme for the rebuilding of "social capitalism" in tattered, battered, absurd Italy, the PDS hopes to win a consensus wide enough to seize the centre ground.

But instead, the party's fortunes continue to sway to and fro like a weathercock in a February gale, as it tries to hold the left alliance together, trades policies in return for votes, combats the formidable system of mass media ranged against it, but then itself lurches into the same scandals as its adversaries.

The broad but precarious leftwing alliance which the PDS assembled is going to the electorate with a promise of reform, and an emphasis on "the moral question" in politics. But within 48 hours this week, the party's deputy leader and rising star Massimo D'Alema joined the list of those under investigation for illegal financing of political parties, and for the second time in a year party officials in the north have been arrested on the discovery of mysterious bank accounts in Switzerland, traced to the PDS.

Fifteen local PDS officials in the Venice region received warrants as one councillor, Renato Morandini, tried to explain how £100,000 of Fiat money was found in his Swiss account.

The PDS says this is all the result of a dirty political plot, and history gives them plenty of reason to presume so — especially since D'Alema's accuser is the disgraced Socialist leader Bettino Craxi, the key figure in the Italian corrup-

tion saga. Their opponents re-tort that the Communists and the PDS were and are as much part of the old balance of power as any of the other players in Italy's Byzantine political labyrinth.

The truth is somewhere in between. The involvement of the Communists and the PDS in the squalid machinations of corruption was negligible and amateurish compared to the real professionals from the Christian Democrat and Socialist parties. But involved they certainly were.

The first PDS official to come forward in Milan, at the start of the scandals, was a gregarious fellow called Luigi Carnevale, who was the party's representative on the unofficial committee which allegedly divided up the spoils of bribes paid for contracts to work on Milan's transport systems.

The scandal spread to cover contracts handed out to the various "Red Co-operatives" in the north, whose shares in the work kept money flowing illegally to the old PCI. A party factotum called Primo Greganti was found to be the holder of secret bank accounts in Switzerland, although he insisted that they were his private business and nothing to do with the party.

The PDS's opponents hope such behaviour by party officials and leaders will blot out the party's message. Added to which, as the PDS struggles to combat the alliance of Silvio Berlusconi with the old guard, the fascists and the rebel Northern League, the party is accused of "communism". This is manifestly absurd: Berlusconi, in the absence of a coherent policy of his own, is trying to play the old Christian Democrat game of anti-communism, but this time without the communists.

Quite what the PDS proposes, however, is a more complicated matter. The manifesto unveiled by Achille Occhetto on Wednesday was the natural outcome of 20 years of change within the southern European communist parties and of the five years since the collapse of the Berlin wall.

The Italian communists have for many years been replacing Leninist ideas with "broad democratic alliances" at their fortress of Bologna and other cities in the central "Red Belt", steering a very capitalist economic boom under violent siege from the regime which culminated in the station bomb of 1980.

But the "Bologna model" held its ground, and by the time Mikhail Gorbachev had dissolved the CPSU, Occhetto had already metamorphosed

his party uneasily towards its present incarnation.

The Communist Party officially died and the PDS was born at a conference at Rimini in February 1991. However, Italy is home to the last serious Marxists, and the rump of hardliners, calling itself Communist Refoundation, has remained an unexpectedly large political force on which the PDS is still dependent for a majority.

But the real balancing act has been on the other, liberal, side of the party as the PDS fought desperately against extinction in the years after its inception. The party polled only 16.5 per cent at the last election in April 1992, after a peak of over 35 per cent for the old Communists in 1976.

But the party played its cards carefully. It tried to court a wider constituency, moving into the vacuum created by the collapse to the ruling parties. It appealed to the liberal Catholic bloc, it stitched itself in with new players such as the Greens and the radical Network movement of Leoluca Orlando, it serenaded what it called "enlightened industrialists" and brought in the free-market centre ground and liberal judges and businessmen in the new *Alleanza Democratica*.

There was even a flirtation with the hard rightwing Northern League, all the while keeping a ready smile for Communist Refoundation on the left flank. The PDS became a Janus-like creature by necessity, as it presented itself as a party not of permanent opposition but of government. And in recent mayoral elections, the strategy paid off. The party fielded alliances which beat off the League in the north and the neo-fascists in the south, so as to lay claim to being the only truly national party left in Italy.

As the present election campaign opened, the PDS seemed to have the upper hand. The alliances it had piloted at the mayoral elections were holding together on the national stage.

But the squabbling soon started: between the PDS and the Greens, the Network and the re-vamped Socialists, the free-marketters and Communist Refoundation; with poor Occhetto trying to mediate and stop the house from falling down before the election on March 27. You cannot please all the people all of the time, especially when your main opponent — Silvio Berlusconi — controls the networks that preach brazenly to 60 per cent of the television viewing public.

However, the PDS manifesto is an attempt to do just that. The party has either found an

innovative balance between old Socialist ideals and the new realities of the market, or else it has been caught between the contradictions innate within the squabbling constituencies it now seeks to represent.

So far the signs are that the appeal of the "Progressive" alliance is moving only a little distance beyond the old Communist alliance between the hornrimmed intelligentsia and the overvalued working class at its peak of popularity.

The gaggle of bus drivers in the Piazza Venezia are still deep red. Said Mauro Rizzo: "I've always voted Communist and I'll vote for Occhetto obviously, although I think he's a weak man and I'm not sure what his policies are. The Communists used to defend the workers, but this lot seem to want to defend everybody, which isn't possible."

"For me," said Giovanna Mele on a fruit stall, "the leopard never changes his spots. You can't be a Communist one minute and a good Italian the next. Not everyone who vote for them will be Communist, but Occhetto's a Communist, and look at some of the people he's got with him! — against the Church and against Italy. Berlusconi is a good man and a patriot."

Others, however, feel as though they are being forced into Occhetto's arms. "I do not like Communism and I never have," says the old Jewish baker Giacomo Piccirillo. "I'm a businessman and I've always voted for the centre, the Republicans. Now I have to vote for Occhetto."

The manifesto they have to consider was drawn up after months of consultations spanning trade unions, the Bank of Italy and the employers' federation.

The PDS does not promise an immediate lowering of taxes and interest rates, which it says would be inflationary, but does pledge a "decentralisation of state impositions on the taxpayer" and a general reduction in state services.

The PDS emphasises efficiency and modernity, and endorses a privatisation programme. The forthcoming election is a test not only of 20 years of post-communist strategy, but of Italy's soul. For the PDS to win, ending 50 years of rule by a closed elite, would signify genuine upheaval in Italian society during the past three years. For the PDS to fail, as is likely, would indicate that Italy's "quiet revolution" was ultimately a piece of cosmetic melodrama, as many have feared and said all along.

The Guardian

Britain's Liberal Democrats eye election breakthrough

By Alan Wheatley
Reuters

LONDON — Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown is mocked by his detractors as the prince Charles of British politics, earnestly prescribing worthy remedies for society's ills with the ease of someone who has no real power.

But it is not just because he is seen as smug and sometimes sanctimonious that the former paratrooper with boyish good looks is loudly jeered whenever he rises to speak in parliament.

Rather, the ruling conservatives and the main Labour Party opposition sense in the minority Liberal Democrats a threat to Britain's two-party system — even though the party at present holds only 22 of the 651 seats in the House of Commons.

The Liberal Democrats remain the most important potential catalyst of change in British politics, said the left-leaning Guardian newspaper in an editorial.

Elections due in the coming months are likely to confirm this potential. After two crushing by-election wins in 1993, the "Lib Dems" enjoy a comfortable 11-percentage-point lead in the race for the Eastleigh seat in southern England left vacant by the death in bizarre sexual circumstances of conservative MP Stephen Milligan.

Council elections in May should play to the "Lib Dems" grassroots strengths, while the party's gathering momentum in southern and western England should ensure headline-grabbing gains against the conservatives in June's European elections.

So far so good. Mr. Ashdown's task is to elevate his party into a genuine political force by overcoming the resistance to change among voters that, according to polls, would limit the Lib Dems to barely more than 20 per cent of the vote in a general election.

The party, born out of a coalition between the 150-year-old liberals and the newly-formed Social Democratic Party, promised briefly in the early 1980s to become a genuine third force.

But Britain's first-past-the-post political system prevented it from translating its popular support into parliamentary seats and the party, long a proponent of proportional representation, has spent the past decade on the political fringe.

In a new book, called

"Beyond Westminster," Ashdown sets out why he thinks the political tide might be ready to turn again and carry the Lib Dems into the big leagues.

The book narrates Mr. Ashdown's experiences living for much of 1993 among different groups of people up and down Britain, ranging from silk weavers in Suffolk to a Bangladeshi grocer's family in the drug-infested moss side district of Manchester.

His conclusion? People are fed up with politics as usual, especially the navel-gazing by lawmakers and journalists in the hothouse atmosphere of Westminster, the seat of parliament.

"No one is at all convinced by the shouting and overheated rhetoric in parliament, except as a kind of running political soap opera which is entertaining to watch but irrelevant to the real things that matter. In short the gap between government and governed in Britain is dangerously wide and getting wider."

This would be a self-serving conclusion in the extreme, gently inviting readers to snuggle up to the Lib Dem alternative, if it did not reflect a trend apparent elsewhere.

Mr. Ashdown sees the large vote for Texan billionaire Ross Perot in the 1992 U.S. presidential election, and the rapid decline of establishment parties in countries such as Italy and Japan, as possibly auguring a crisis in Democracy.

"I have become more and more convinced that this dislocation between politics and real life is creating a dangerous and growing gap between politicians and people in Britain and other advanced Western democracies," he writes.

Mr. Ashdown, 53 and leader of the Liberal Democrats since 1988, finds a Britain that is deeply divided. Some inner city areas are so sunk in poverty, lawlessness and despair that they are, effectively, not part of the country at all. He says.

But he also finds a Britain alive with new ideas and full of energy waiting to be unleashed, naturally by the Liberal Democrats.

"Government will have to concentrate less on telling people what to do and more on enabling them to do things for themselves," Mr. Ashdown concludes.

The next elections will show whether the message is getting through.

Women Arab artists defy misconceptions

ALTHOUGH THE National Museum for Women in the Arts isn't known for flaming polemics, you'd expect its new show on women in the Arab World to be, if not too hot to handle, at least politically volatile. The people who put the show together, female Arab artists and sculptors from 15 countries, would answer that that's just one more media misconception about their lives.

In fact, a wholly unexpected feeling of creativity and freedom emerges from "Forces of Change: Artists of the Arab World," which runs at the museum through May, and though it has its pointed moments the show has steered clear so far of a single home-government or embassy complaint. Perhaps more remarkable, political friction was minimal at a full-day symposium on "Women in the Arab World" held at the museum last weekend. The seven-year-old museum had begun anyway to outgrow its early reputation of extreme soft-spokenness (a recent show dealt with breast cancer). But the lingering low-key, determinedly nonpolitical approach has its payoffs, and one is to allow visitors to encounter in a nonagitated state the remarkably rich collection of works, from illuminated calligraphy to big abstract installations, from a set of cultures too often associated only with conflict and grief.

One surprise is the emergence of a surprisingly familiar, indeed a recognizably American theme — a sense of bridging and incorporation, of artists trying to pick a path between modern art and a long past, that should ring true for many American

artists lost in the thickets of hyphenated identity. "Just as a person cannot survive long without memory," says the wall copy in one room, "societies cannot evolve creatively without carrying some collective sense of their heritage into the future." Curator Salwa Mikdadi Nashashibi, herself a wanderer who has lived in five Arab countries, says the trick was to find the familiar "unity in diversity," to balance what is different about all these countries with what, for the purposes of a coherent show, could be considered the same.

The common ground, surely to the layman's surprise, is not the widespread popular image of a veiled, silenced and put-upon female population stuck somewhere between the belly dancer, the harem and modern religious arguments about veiling. Instead there is a lively attempt to knit modern, often abstract art out of the rich and double-edged traditions of the long Middle Eastern cultural past. Anger and restriction do play a role: The tradition contains many barriers against the show's artists struggle. But the harem is most certainly not.

One room, "Image and Word," offers the ways in which artists of four different nationalities make visual use of the Arabic calligraphy that plays so dramatic a role in traditional Islamic art. Another, filled with a giant installation called "Scheherazade 101," turns the theme of the famous "Arabian Nights" storyteller into a roomful of 101 panels, from shawl fringe and satin pillow to Pepsi cans, that does more than any news footage to evoke the

chaotic, jumbled textures of the modern Middle East.

The subjects are by no means all female. Some involve men in the public sphere, like the "Willing to Begin" collage of '50s-suited male figures at the entryway; others are explicitly universal, like the professions of faith engraved on modernist ceramic plates by Iraqi artist Wasma K. Chorbachi. That the work is by women seems mainly to offer the extra jolt of distance from the tradition so that ideas come through freshly.

"We're not showing anything here that's unusual in the Arab World," Ms. Nashashibi says. "The media in the Arab World support the Arab woman as artist and encourage her to exhibit." At the symposium on women in the Arab World, featuring discussions of everything from Iraqi archaeology to Palestinian women's rights, speakers referred frequently to Arab feminist movements of long historical standing, some underappreciated by sister movements in the West. One speaker, the first woman in Sudan to qualify as a surgeon, made the interesting suggestion that the much-covered fundamentalist movements have in some cases arisen specifically in countries with, and arguably in response to, visible and substantive progress by women.

Is it so? By sheer happenstance, the show's opening coincides this month with an unexpected corroboration, the first American book tour by an Arabic language novelist: the Lebanese writer Hanan Al Shaykh, whose well-received 1992 "Women of Sand and Myrrh" pre-

sented the same bracing glimpse of real people in place of cloth-wrapped stereotypes. "Women of Sand and Myrrh," set in an unnamed desert kingdom, sold here only after Nagib Mahfouz's Nobel Prize awakened American editors' interest in current Arabic literature; Al Shaykh, a tiny woman who spent some years in Beirut and the Gulf states and now lives in London, is currently engaged in a classic, full-blast 22-city American book tour.

Like the artists at the symposium, Al Shaykh shrugs off suggestions that her work is political or is read as such. "Women of Sand and Myrrh" was, it's true, banned in the Gulf, and readers of its bleak tale can hardly be surprised. But the newly translated "The Story of Zahra," a steamy psychological novel about a troubled Lebanese woman who gets involved with a sniper, caused no scandal worth speaking of in Lebanon, whose literary culture, Al Shaykh insists, has long been comfortable with passionate female literary voices.

"That's why people come to literature," she said at Washington, D.C., reading last week, responding to an audience question at Chapters Bookstore. "Because real life is so much richer than politics, and people get tired of illusions and assumptions."

Jordanian artists who are taking part in the exhibition are Her Royal Highness Princess Wajdan Ali, Hind Nasser, Suba Shoman, Samia Zarou and Mona Sami.

The article is reprinted from the Washington Post.

Kalashnikov A name to dread, a smile to disarm

By Charles J. Hanley
The Associated Press

"DOES IT trouble you, Mikhail Timofeyevich, that your creation has killed so many people around the world?"

The kind-eyed old gentleman had heard the question before. Clearly, he had even put it to himself at times, in those long winters hidden away in the Russian heartland.

"All I can say," he replied, "is that terrorists would have found something else to kill people with, even if there weren't my Kalashnikovs."

Forget U.S. President Bill Clinton, forget Russian President Boris Yeltsin, forget Marx. For the gunboys of Somalia and the old boys of Vietnam, for the gangs of Los Angeles and the grunts of Bosnia, the name whose parts — Kah-Lash-Nik-Off — snap and click into place like a fresh magazine of high-velocity ammunition.

Mikhail T. Kalashnikov, still cherub-checked if silver-haired at 74, was almost a boy himself, age 23, when he began designing the assault rifle they eventually dubbed the AK-47. "Anatomical Kalashnikova 1947."

If power grows, as Mao said, from the barrel of a gun, this was the gun.

In 40 years as the standard issue for Soviet-bloc forces, as the weapon of choice for guerrillas from Vietnam to Nicaragua, as the everyday tool of terrorists, perhaps 50 million copies of the "AK," its descendants and clones have been produced in almost a dozen countries.

Rugged, dependable, cheap and 600-rounds-a-minute lethal, the no-frills Kalashnikov is history's most widely distributed piece of

He's the man who made the gun that armed the world, and he recently emerged from a half-century in a "closed city." This look at Mikhail T. Kalashnikov is based on reporting in Moscow and an interview in the United States.

killing machinery, the curve of its "banana" clip familiar to generations of T.V. news viewers.

And over the years it has done great damage, a toll that weighs on its creator.

This Siberian peasant's son has told friends, for instance, that he sometimes wishes he had become an agricultural engineer instead of a weapon designer. Last year, he said publicly he wanted to establish a "fund for gunshot victims."

When asked now about the fund, he is interrupted by Elena, his daughter and traveling companion. That impractical idea was "a mistake," she tells an interviewer.

Mr. Kalashnikov, offering no further explanation, moves on to another concern, his longtime hometown, Izhevsk, a city of a half-million people in the highlands west of the Ural Mountains.

Izhevsk was a major Soviet arms-manufacturing center, a "closed city" where Kalashnikov's design team worked over the years to improve the AK-47 for the giant Izhmash Defence Enterprise. Now, he said, "These are very bad times."

"In our region, everyone was in the military business. Now that there's not such a demand, people are losing their jobs at Izhmash, it's a mess."

Mr. Kalashnikov feels the

in Dallas. "They really kept him prisoner all those years," said American friend and host Berge Boghosian, an arms dealer who calls Mr. Kalashnikov "the sweetest man on Earth."

Emerging from his cell means facing questions, however, about sharing responsibility for a violent world, and that means retelling the story of the AK-47's origins.

In 1941, tank commander Kalashnikov was wounded in a battle with Russia's German invaders. In the hospital, other wounded men complained of their army's deficit in infantry weapons ancient bolt-action rifles versus the Germans' modern firearms. Sgt. Kalashnikov, a clever mechanic, decided to spend his recuperation building a machine pistol like the Germans'.

His pistol was never put into service, but it established him as a weapons maker, and in 1943 he competed with other designers on Russia's first assault rifle — a weapon firing light rounds at a rapid rate, and also capable of single-round semiautomatic fire. When they dragged the Kalashnikov weapon through swamp water and it still fired, he was on his way.

The moral of the AK-47 story: "I built it to protect my country."

Today, Mr. Kalashnikov still designs weapons, but only hunting rifles.

"I'm not going to work on any more military things," he said.

Has he sworn off man-killing devices?

The cheerful old father of famous guns hesitated and smiled. "No," he explained. "It's just that, into the next century, nothing is going to be made better than by rifle anyway."

Army says killings could have been prevented

(Continued from page 1)

radio that he had full confidence in the senior army command despite the massacre that suspended the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) negotiations and plunged the occupied land into a cycle of bloodshed.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat suspended peace talks with Israel over the massacre, demanding it disarm the 120,000 Jewish settlers of the occupied territories and that the world provide protection for Palestinians.

The Rabin government decided two days after the massacre to establish the inquiry, headed by supreme court Chief Justice Meir Shamgar.

Mr. Rabin, who is also defence minister, had opposed establishing an independent commission but then acceded to his cabinet's wishes to have a full public hearing.

The commission's recommendations are not binding. But the findings of similar panels resulted in the dismissal or reprimand of senior officials following probes of the 1973 Middle East war and the massacre of hundreds of Palestinians in Beirut refugee camps by Israeli-allied militiamen in September 1982.

Gen. Yatom said Goldstein reached the Tomb of the Patriarchs at about 5:20 a.m. It was a Friday when Muslims were marking a key day in the Holy Month of Ramadan and Jews were celebrating their Purnim holiday.

About 400 to 500 Muslim

worshippers were gathered in the Ibrahim Mosque. On the other side of a partition, 13 Jews were praying, Gen. Yatom said. The Jewish worshippers told army investigators they did not see Goldstein enter the mosque.

Under the security arrangements, 10 troops should have been posted at the entrances to the compound and inside, Gen. Yatom said. Instead, only one army officer was on duty inside and four border policemen were stationed at two gates outside.

Three additional border policemen should have been there by 5 a.m. but overslept. One should have been posted inside and two at the gates, Gen. Yatom said.

The officer inside sent a soldier who should have patrolled indoors to another posting away from the compound and an Israeli policeman did not show up for indoor duty, Gen. Yatom said.

Gen. Yatom did not go into further detail but said in response to a question that no armed Israelis were allowed in the mosque area during Muslim prayers. Goldstein was wearing his army reserve uniform at the time and was known to the guards.

Goldstein apparently entered the Ibrahim Mosque through the main gate, along with the Muslim worshippers. Once inside, he fired long bursts from his Galil automatic rifle.

By the time the guard officer had pushed his way into the mosque, the shooting was over and he found Goldstein lying in a corner, beaten to death by worshippers, Gen. Yatom said.

2 Palestinians shot and killed

(Continued from page 1)

issued Monday, the Al Qassam Brigades threatened suicide attacks if settlers do not move out of the occupied lands.

"We will not let them enjoy the luxury of sleep in their homes of a feeling of safety on the road," it said. "We have chosen our targets and our living martyrs have been instructed to carry out the suicide operations."

The group said it had decided on a five-stage plan to avenge the mosque massacre, "and each stage will make the Israeli people and the settlers cry in blood for their dead."

Asked whether Hamas has singled out potential targets for the threatened attacks if settlers do not evacuate Kiryat Arba, home of Baruch Goldstein, the mosque killer, and other settlements called Gush Katif, Kedumim, Tekoa and Ariel by March 15 as the group is demanding, Mr. Nazzari said: "The general targets are (the Israeli) military and settlers... the leadership of Hamas has issued orders to all (Al Qassam) units to continue the resistance against occupation."

Gen. Yatom rejected claims by several Palestinian witnesses who said that Goldstein had at least one settler accomplice inside the mosque and that several fleeing worshippers were wounded by army gunfire outside the tomb area.

Gen. Yatom said according to soldiers, three of the Palestinians may have been trampled to death when worshippers fled. Gen. Yatom insisted soldiers did not kill anyone inside the mosque but did shoot dead four or five others in clashes in Hebron that day.

Israeli radio and television stations broadcast the hearing live from Israel's supreme court. Gen. Yatom gave two and a half hours of public

testimony before the panel closed the session at his request for security reasons.

Judge Shamgar announced that the panel would on Wednesday visit the massacre site.

"It's important that we become familiar with the place in order to understand the explanations and evidence that will be given to us," the chief justice said.

The commission will look into whether the army, which is responsible for security at the Tomb of the Patriarchs, could have done anything to prevent the massacre, and whether adequate security was in place.

Few members of the public showed up to attend the inquiry. Proceedings went behind closed doors whenever officers testified about deployment details.

The most recent event broadcast from the same chambers was the supreme court appeal of John Demjanjuk, acquitted last year of being the Nazi guard Ivan the Terrible.

Past independent investigations have found that the security services had lied about torturing arrested suspects. Another found top officers and government ministers indirectly responsible for the massacre of hundreds of Palestinians at Beirut's Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in 1982.

The commission has no formal power to enforce its recommendations, but Israeli governments traditionally have acted on the findings of investigative panels.

About 50 demonstrators outside the court demanded an inquiry into the deaths of Jews by Arabs, while Palestinian human rights activist Zuhair Sabagh charged that the panel was putting too much emphasis on Goldstein as a madman and not enough on the broader problem of 120,000 Jewish settlers, many of them armed, living among two million Palestinians.

"For me, every settler is a potential Goldstein. They are armed, they are fanatic," said Mr. Sabagh, a researcher for the Palestinian human rights group Al Haq which has launched its own investigation.

Prime Minister Rabin, who also holds the post of defence minister and Ehud Barak, military chief of staff, are expected to testify to the commission.

U.N. urged

(Continued from page 1)

Russian diplomats said Victor Posovoluk, head of Middle East affairs at the Russian Foreign Ministry, and Mr. Arafat focused on "efforts at the Security Council to issue a resolution on the massacre."

Arab MK urges pullout

(Continued from page 1)

writers and other prominent Israeli Arabs, arrived in Damascus Monday on the first open visit by Israelis to Syria.

Israel seized Quneitra, once the provincial capital of the Golan Region, 80 kilometres southwest of Damascus, in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

It relinquished the town in 1974 after razing it to the ground and pulled back to a ceasefire line just west of the town. Most of the inhabitants had fled during the 1967 war.

The Jewish state still holds most of the Golan Heights. Peace talks between Syria and Israel have stalled because Damascus insists on the return of all 1,250 square kilometre of land Israel still holds before it gives solid description of the peace it seeks with the Jewish state.

Mr. Darawshe stood just behind the barbed wire that marks the ceasefire line and gazed as white Israeli tour buses drove along the slopes of the Golan's Abul Naha hill, less than two kilometres away.

"The Israeli occupation is a kind of modern-day colonialism that should end," said Mr. Darawshe. "There can be no peace as long as there is occupation."

Mr. Darawshe, who also heads the Arab Democratic Party in Israel, has said the aim of the group's visit was to offer condolences to President Hafez Al Assad on the Jan. 21 death of his son, Basil, in a car crash.

Mr. Darawshe has said that although he did not carry any message from Israeli leaders to Mr. Assad he was ready to discuss politics if Syria wished. The group is scheduled to meet Mr. Assad Wednesday.

On Monday, President Assad told Syrians their support and compassion following the death of his eldest son had given him the strength and determination to carry on the fight to liberate occupied Arab land.

He was speaking in a television and radio address to mark the end of a 40-day mourning period for his son Basil.

"This noble and sincere compassion you surrounded me with makes me feel more responsible and at the same time it gives me more strength and ability to exert every effort to continue... serious work to liberate the occupied Arab lands," he said.

"We have a lot of work to complete and big missions to carry out, so let's continue our work," he added.

Basil, an army captain engineer, was widely regarded as a possible successor to his father although he held no such official title.

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U.S. envoy tries to draw Serbs into Bosnian settlement

BELGRADE (R) — U.S. special envoy Charles Redman opened talks with Serbian leaders Tuesday to try and draw them into an overall settlement embracing all three sides in the Bosnian war.

Mr. Redman flew into Belgrade from Vienna, where he had chaired negotiations between representatives of Bosnian Croats and Muslims to work out the specifics of a U.S.-brokered Washington agreement on a Muslim-Croat federation.

Under the terms of the deal, the two sides are to form a federation of ethnically-based cantons in Bosnia and then join them to Croatia in a loose confederation.

Neither the Washington meeting that led to the agreement nor the Vienna negotiations include Bosnia's Serb nationalists, who have the strongest military forces in Bosnia and have seized roughly 70 per cent of the country's territory.

Any viable settlement of the 23-month Bosnian war, diplomats say, must include the Serbs — and provide for them to give up parts of territory under their control.

Mr. Redman told reporters on arrival the Vienna talks were "going very well" and he hoped most of the work in working out specifics of the tentative Washington agreement would be completed by the end of the week.

He added: "As... we move towards the next steps and what needs to be done in Bosnia, the Bosnian Serbs are going to have to be part of that... important part of it. And we have to find now a way to find something that's

acceptable for the Bosnian government as well as something that we can negotiate successfully with the Bosnian Serbs."

Mr. Redman began talks with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, whose support for Serbs in Bosnia is widely seen as one of the chief reasons for the outbreak of war in April 1992.

The U.S. envoy was also scheduled to meet Nikolai Koljetic, a senior aide of Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic.

As Mr. Redman met Serb leaders, most of Bosnia's front lines were reported calm as ceasefires held between Serbs and Muslims in Sarajevo and between Muslims and Croats elsewhere.

In a striking demonstration that a degree of normality was returning to still-besieged Sarajevo, two trams ran through the city for the first time since May 2, 1992.

Although the trams were escorted by U.N. armoured vehicles, cheering crowds saw them as a sign that the worst may be over.

On Monday, Croat and Muslim forces in Bosnia complied with a noon deadline for the withdrawal of heavy weapons from areas that have seen bitter skirmishes for almost a year.

The withdrawal was part of a ceasefire agreement that preceded the Washington Federation Accord.

In another move that underscored progress on the battlefield, preparations went ahead to open the airport of the northern Bosnian town of Tuzla for an airlift that could bring relief to hundreds of thousands of civilians.

More than 100 Scandinavian peacekeepers have taken up position at Tuzla Airport, closed since the beginning of the war, and U.N. officials said Muslim-led army units were withdrawing from the immediate area.

"We expect the soldiers of the Bosnian government to be withdrawing during the course of the afternoon," U.N. deputy spokesman Matthew Nerzig told a news conference in Zagreb.

The deployment of the Scandinavians was a first step towards reopening the airport and allowing U.N. relief organisations to deliver humanitarian aid to hundreds of thousands of civilians in the area.

The U.N. wants to get consent from Serb forces for the opening of the airport, which has been closed since the beginning of the Bosnian war. The Serbs say they fear that the Bosnian army would use it to fly in weapons.

In Geneva, a spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said about a dozen countries had agreed in principle to fly aid into Tuzla but the airport was not expected to open for at least a week.

Muslims and Croats fought together against Serbs opposed to Bosnian independence. But the Muslim-Croat alliance collapsed a year ago. Since then, the Bosnian war has been a three-sided scramble for territory.

Though truce agreements and the Muslim-Croat Federation Accord have raised hopes for a final settlement of the conflict, diplomats say the road to peace is studded with obstacles.

To underscore the problems, the Belgrade-based Tanjug said Mr. Redman has no concrete proposals to change Serb attitudes.

The news agency, which often reflects Serbian policies, said Washington was trying to isolate Bosnia's Serb community.

In Paris, French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe Tuesday quashed reports that France was considering sending extra troops to Bosnia in response to pleas from U.N. commanders to reinforce a fragile truce.

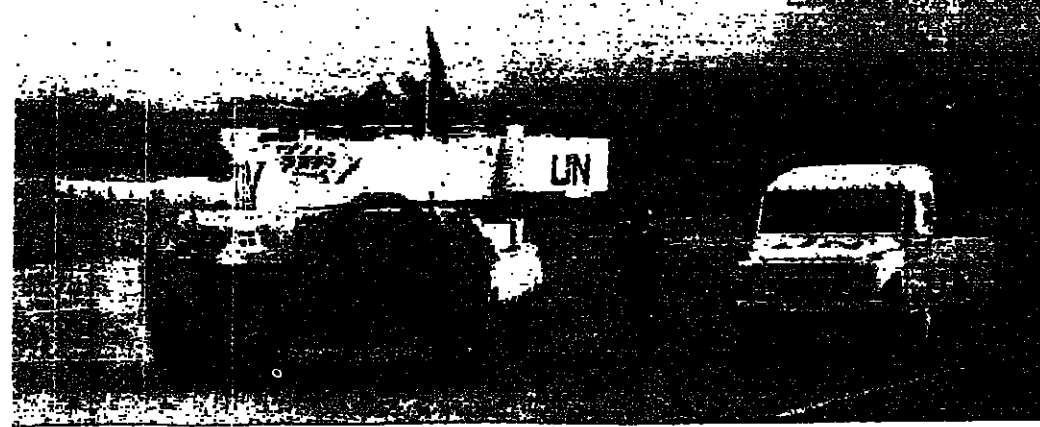
Mr. Juppe said after talks with Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic: "All French authorities consider that we cannot go beyond the effort already made. We are the biggest contributor (to U.N. peacekeeping forces). We have done our duty."

France-Info Radio had reported Monday night that the Defence Ministry was considering sending 800 more soldiers to help get public services in Sarajevo.

But a military spokesman said Tuesday that any extra troops sent to Sarajevo were likely to be redeployed from elsewhere in former Yugoslavia.

Britain is canvassing other nations to provide more troops for the peacekeeping effort. France already has more than 6,000 soldiers in ex-Yugoslavia out of a total U.N. force of 28,350.

Commenting indirectly on the U.S.-brokered Muslim-Croat agreement, Mr. Juppe said there would be no durable peace unless the Serbs were brought into the negotiating process.



A Danish Leopard tank, part of the UNPROFOR forces in Bosnia, and a jeep stand on the runway of the still closed Tuzla Airport as the Serbs control the hills behind the airport (AFP photo)

Mandela wants U.N. to mediate

THOHOYANDOU, South Africa (R) — Nelson Mandela said Tuesday the African National Congress would insist the U.N. mediate talks to end the constitutional deadlock in South Africa.

He also said the country's first democratic election could not be delayed, as some conservative groups are demanding.

"The ANC will insist (that) only the United Nations must mediate," Mr. Mandela told a gathering of about 2,000 university students in a rally at a Thohoyandou Stadium in the Venda black homeland.

Commenting on suggestions by separatist blacks and whites that the April election should be postponed, Mr. Mandela said: "If we did that, even our own members of the ANC would hang us."

The ANC leader also reiterated that a white homeland or "Volkstaat" would not be created for separatist Afrikaners in post-apartheid South Africa. At a media briefing earlier in the day, he said he had made this clear in talks with the

pro-apartheid Conservative Party (CP), one of the members of the right-wing Afrikaner People's Front.

"I have repeatedly told them as far as I am concerned the idea of an Afrikaner Volkstaat will never be on the cards (but) I am prepared to sit down and see how we can allay their fears of democracy."

Mr. Mandela was uncompromising on the election date, saying: "There is no possibility whatsoever of us shifting this date... There would be more trouble than there is taking place now. If elections do not take place... The only way of avoiding it is to ensure the elections take place."

Referring to Bophuthatswana President Lucas Mangope and the decision by the homeland cabinet to refer to its parliament a final decision on registering for the election, Mr. Mandela said: "It seems I'm talking to a stone. I think we've given him enough time... If he continues to be arrogant, we will have to take action against him. It's a matter of time."

Meanwhile police moved on Bophuthatswana's broadcasting headquarters Tuesday after workers seized the building and took the son of the South African black homeland's president hostage, witnesses said.

Police fired teargas to dislodge the workers, who took over the building earlier in the day in a dispute of pay and pensions amid widespread unrest in the homeland in the run-up to South Africa's first all-race elections in April.

The witnesses said homeland President Lucas Mangope's son Eddie, the broadcasting corporation's chairman, was in the building in the capital Mmabatho when heavily-armed police moved in.

They said about 700 workers, demanding a pay rise and pension payouts, closed entrances to the centre in the homeland.

Mr. Masilo escaped but before the police action an angry Eddie Mangope, asked by Reuters in the building whether he was being held against his will, replied:

Clinton defends wife in Whitewater case

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton said Monday that Whitewater is no Watergate despite Republican efforts to whip up "hysteria" and emotionally defended his wife's integrity in the politically damaging case.

At a news conference, the embattled president also disclosed that he learned federal investigators were looking into possible links between him and questionable Arkansas business deals soon after the probe began last fall.

But he insisted there was nothing sinister about that alert and said he thought nothing of it at the time. And a White House official later said Mr. Clinton learned of the probe — which did not target him and Hillary Rodham Clinton — only after the White House received press inquiries about it.

Under questioning, Mr. Clinton dismissed any suggestion that the investigation into the Whitewater Arkansas land investment deal, a savings and loan failure — and any White House effort to cover up the Clinton's roles in those matters — was starting to resemble the Watergate scandal that drove President Richard Nixon from office 20 years ago.

"There is no analogy except any hysteria they (the Republicans) can gin up about it," The Democratic president said. "There will not be a cover-up. There will be an abuse of power in this office and there is no credible charge that I violated any law..."

"This is going to be a very different thing. As in Watergate, a special prosecutor is investigating the complex Whitewater affair and has subpoenaed six White House aides and four present and former Treasury Department officials to testify on White House involvement."

"If I did something wrong, it will come out in the special counsel (investigation)... they will find the truth," Mr. Clinton said. "Let them do it."

On Capitol Hill, Republicans continued to clamour for congressional hearings to parallel the judicial inquiry. But special prosecutor Robert Fiske said that was a bad idea.

In a letter to Senate Banking Committee Donald Riegle and the panel's senior Republican, Alfonso D'Amato, Mr. Fiske said inquiry by a congressional committee "would pose a severe risk to the integrity of our investigation."

The New York lawyer said he was concerned by the possibility that congressional witnesses might be granted immunity from prosecution in exchange for their testimony and by premature public disclosure of "matters at the core of the criminal investigation."

Chairman of both the House and Senate Banking Committees assured Mr. Fiske they would do nothing to jeopardise his investigation. But Sen. D'Amato said he told Mr. Fiske his "opposition is premature and overly broad."

Sen. D'Amato said on CNN's Crossfire that he obviously would not seek immunity for witnesses that could undercut Mr. Fiske's investigation but said Republicans would meet with Mr. Fiske Wednesday on their request for Whitewater hearings.

Mr. Clinton grew visibly intense and emotional Monday when he defended the integrity of Mrs. Clinton, a partner in the Arkansas law firm that handled some Whitewater matters and who has become subject of some unflattering press speculation.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Swiss houses ablaze as train explodes

ZURICH (R) — A train pulling petrol tankers jumped the tracks at a north Zurich railway station and exploded in a fireball Tuesday, setting nearby houses ablaze. The blast injured at least one person, police said. Radio 24, a local radio station, reported two women were hurt and taken to hospital. A police spokesman said five petrol wagons were derailed and caught fire. Apparently after a wagon axle broke as the train passed through Zurich-Affoltern Station. Heavy black smoke from the explosion cloaked the area. Police said petrol flowed into sewers, setting fire to nearby houses and blowing out sewer manhole covers. A Reuters reporter at the scene said three houses next to the railway track were burnt out. Police helicopters flew overhead, warning local residents over loudspeakers that a high risk of explosion remained and telling them not to smoke or use any form of fire. Radio 24 said scores of residents fled their homes and went into nearby woods to escape the danger.

European women ministers show solidarity

BRUSSELS (R) — Women ministers from around Europe gathered in Brussels in a show of solidarity on the eve of International Women's Day. Some 26 female ministers of justice, employment, transport and social affairs, from 16 of the Council of Europe's member states, signed a declaration of principles for equal opportunities in Europe after a day of discussion. "When I see women ministers there's always a kind of understanding between them. They can support each other and make visible the fact that they exist," Belgian Minister for Employment, Labour and Equal Opportunities Miel Smet told Reuters. Ms. Smet, who came up with the idea for the European Conference of Women Ministers, said they wanted to see improved chances for women in jobs, education and especially politics. "Women are half the population. It's a democratic deficit if you don't have that half represented in government, especially as (they) have a different past and tradition which influences their behaviour and ideas," Ms. Smet said.

Observers say Kazakh election unfair

ALMA ATA (R) — Foreign observers in Kazakhstan Tuesday branded as unfair the first multi-party parliamentary elections to be held in the giant former Soviet republic. A delegation from the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), of which Kazakhstan is a member, named several points where Monday's elections had failed to meet what they called democratic standards. "The general assessment of the CSCE Parliamentary Assembly was that the elections did not meet internationally accepted standards for free and fair elections," CSCE delegation head Jan Van Houwelingen told a news conference. One of the observers' main criticisms was that local election committees had been arbitrary in deciding which candidates to bar from the poll. Kazakh officials were not immediately available to respond to the comments.

Scots Conservatives hit record low

EDINBURGH (R) — Conservatives slumped to their lowest poll rating ever in Scotland as they launched a campaign Monday to break the opposition Labour Party's stranglehold on local government. Ian Lang, cabinet minister heading the government in Scotland, announced he was sending a letter showing the success of Prime Minister John Major's government to households. But just hours later a new opinion poll for the British Broadcasting Corporation gave the Conservatives only 13 per cent of the Scottish vote, the lowest ever recorded. Labour were ahead with 47 per cent and the independence-seeking Scottish National Party (SNP) second with 25. At the 1992 general election, Labour won 39 per cent of the Scottish vote, the nationally-ruling Conservatives 25.7 per cent, and the SNP 21.5. Conservative support was three per cent down on last month, the SNP two per cent up, and Labour steady.

Tapie to be quizzed in MP's murder

TOULON, France (R) — Police probing the murder of a corruption-fighting French parliamentarian questioned a senior local official Tuesday and were due to quiz Marseille soccer boss and politician Bernard Tapie later, justice sources said. Maurice Arreckx, president of the Var Department

Council, was questioned for several hours about the Feb. 25 shooting of Yann Piat, who had named him and Mr. Tapie in a letter to an aide in which she said she feared assassination. "I am very happy to testify... if that can help the course of justice. So much the better," Mr. Arreckx told reporters on entering the police station. Judge Thierry Rolland, investigating the killing, has placed two minor Toulon underworld figures under investigation for suspected murder but made clear he believes there was a wider conspiracy, possibly including politicians. Police also detained four other people with underworld links for questioning in the investigation Tuesday, the justice sources said.

Clarke is ready to succeed Major

LONDON (R) — Britain's Finance Minister Kenneth Clarke, the man most likely to succeed Prime Minister John Major, said he would like the job — but only when Mr. Major decided the time was right. With the embattled Major being hit by another wave of speculation about his leadership, Chancellor of the Exchequer Clarke said: "I would like to be a contender... but at a time of John Major's choosing." "I have a reasonable desire to keep myself a contender but I completely understand that many other people have the same idea," he told the Independent newspaper in an interview published Tuesday. The latest media speculation on who might replace Mr. Major has centred on Trade Secretary Michael Heseltine after his headline-grabbing testimony last week to Britain's arms-for-Iraq inquiry and a forceful speech on the state of the European Union. Mr. Clarke remains the leading contender in the run-up to local council elections in May and European Parliamentary elections in June. If the Conservatives are routed as polls suggest, this could increase the pressure on Mr. Major to step down. Bookmakers Tuesday made Mr. Clarke even-money favourite to replace Mr. Major, with Mr. Heseltine the second choice at 3-1.

Clinton backs U.N. force for Georgia

WASHINGTON (R) — Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze received President Bill Clinton's conditional support for U.N. peacekeepers in his homeland Monday and said he would make his case Wednesday to the U.N. Security Council. The two leaders, at a news conference after their first meeting, also expressed concern about rising nationalism in Russia. Mr. Shevardnadze said an ultranationalist takeover in Moscow would be "a great threat. Not only for Russia, but also for the whole planet at large." Mr. Clinton called "very remote" the possibility of a return to cold war with the prospect of "total destruction of two great civilisations" by nuclear war. But he said it is likely that more Russians will turn to ultranationalists like Vladimir Zhirinovskiy because they spread the attractive message that Russia can regain greatness by reimposing an empire. Mr. Clinton pledged 70 million to Georgia, most of it humanitarian aid to help feed 250,000 refugees from the conflict between government troops and rebels in the break-away Black Sea region of Abkhazia. Some 25 million will purchase 125,000 tonnes of U.S. wheat.

French deny D-Day snub to Kohl

PARIS (R) — French officials denied Monday that Paris had snubbed Germany by failing to invite Chancellor Helmut Kohl to ceremonies in June marking the 50th anniversary of the allied D-Day landings during World War II. The respected daily Le Monde criticised President Francois Mitterrand for his office's handling of the high-profile commemoration. Which has prompted controversy in Germany. But officials insisted there was no misunderstanding between Mr. Mitterrand and Mr. Kohl over the ceremonies, which will be attended by U.S. President Bill Clinton. Britain's Queen Elizabeth and several other heads of state. "The president does not want the commemoration to be interpreted by the German people as an attempt to ostracise them," Mr. Mitterrand's spokesman Jean Musitelli told Reuters. He was responding to reports from Bonn that Chancellor Helmut Kohl, angry at being left out, had barred German diplomats from attending any commemorative events. German government spokesman Dieter Vogel said Monday the military character of the celebrations ruled out German participation. He said Mr. Kohl had not expected to be invited to celebrate allied victories and thought memorial services for the war dead and victims of Nazism were more appropriate events for German officials to attend.

Doctors blame sunbed for skin cancer

NEWCASTLE (R) — British doctors blamed a sunbed for giving a middle-aged woman skin cancer in what is thought to be the first such diagnosis in Britain. The woman, in her 40s, has had only one foreign holiday in her life and has never sunbathed topless or nude. She decided to get a tan with a sunbed before going on a second sun-seeking holiday and doctors are convinced that is how the woman, who has sensitive skin, developed tumour on her breasts and buttocks. "We can be absolutely definite the sunbed has caused her skin cancer," Skin specialist Dr. Peter Farr said at Newcastle Hospital in north-east England. "If she is just a one-off we need not be too worried but I rather suspect she is just the tip of the iceberg." Medical experts have long suspected a link between skin cancer and the ultraviolet rays of tanning devices. But this is thought to be one of the first cases in Britain to be directly linked by a doctor. The woman, who was not named, contacted specialists when she developed skin irritation about a year ago. "The people most at risk are those, using sunbeds all year round and for most of the year. And those who find it difficult to tan and who tan very poorly in natural sunlight," said Dr. Farr.

French radio defies clampdown on sex talk

PARIS (R) — France's second most popular music radio channel said it would defy an official clampdown on free-wheeling live discussions of teenage sex which has infuriated young listeners and raised charges of censorship. France's radio watchdog the Higher Audio-Visual Council (CSA) has ordered Fun Radio to tone down Lovin'fun, a live evening show with 1.3 million listeners in which young people discuss issues ranging from sex to the war in ex-Yugoslavia. Fun Radio's head Benoit Sillard vowed to disobey the ruling, saying it was another attempt to restrict the freedom of radio stations following a new law ordering them to run at least 40 per cent of French songs in their rock music broadcasts. He said the CSA issued its ruling after one of the channel's rivals sent in the transcript of a frank discussion of sodomy. "This was totally unrepresentative. It was a raw 30-second extract out of 30 hours of programming, in which a girl listener talked about sodomy in explicit terms," he said. "It's censorship — the CSA told me it wants to ban young people using such language," said Mr. Sillard. He pledged his programme would continue unchanged.

U.S. military to ban smoking in workplace

WASHINGTON (R) — The Defence Department said it will ban smoking in the workplace at U.S. military facilities worldwide in a major new health initiative. The brief press advisory said the new "smoke-free workplace" will go into effect on April 8 at hundreds of military facilities by broadly expanding current restrictions on smoking at military facilities. The announcement came as Democratic Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts Monday asked for a congressional investigation into allegations that tobacco companies add nicotine to cigarettes to make them addictive.

Widow talks raiders out of stealing

LONDON (R) — An 80-year-old British widow confronted three masked raiders in her home and talked them into handing back the money and valuables they intended stealing, the Times reported Tuesday. The newspaper said Lilian Cole described the raiders as "sweeties" after she had got them to see the error of their ways. "They are wonderful for what they did and I love them," it quoted the retired teacher as saying. "At first I was terrified because they had masks over their faces and were quite big," she said. "I told them I was poor too and that I sympathised with them. I told them I have to sit with hot water bottles at night to keep the heating bills down."

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International jockey challenge in Dubai

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Champion riders from four continents, including champions United States, will vie for the international jockey challenge scheduled for March 25 in Dubai.

In addition to the United States, the other continents represented are Europe, Australia, Asia in addition to the Middle East.

Each country will have two of their best riders pitted against the other teams in four races at different distances, with their horses being picked by lot.

The top jockeys will be competing for the Emirates Bank International Trophy for the team event, and for the Ken Russell Memorial Trophy in the individual contest. Ken Russell, who represented Australia in last year's event here, was recently killed in a riding accident.

Points will be awarded to all finishers, ranging from 10 points to the winner, down to 1 point for the last horse. The organisers however did not give the prize money at stake.

Mike Smith and Chris McCarron will defend the U.S. team title, in the absence of Gary Stevens who romped to the individual crown with an emphatic win in the inaugural tournament last year. Smith recently won the Eclipse Award for 1993 and was champion jockey in the United States last year, while McCarron is a member of the Hall of Fame and his mounts have won in excess of \$163 million.

He was the youngest jockey to win \$100 million and has won more than 6,000 races. In addition to big races success at home, such as Breeder's Cup Classic wins on Alysbea and Sunday Silence, he won the Japan Cup on Pay the Butler.

Last year, Gary Stevens of the United States won the individual title and along with Kent Desormeaux, also took the trophy for the top continental team performance.

Providing the additional sparkle will be two of the finest jockeys in the world, Pat Eddery and Michael Kinnane who will ride under European colours.

Australia will be represented by David and Greg Childs, who are among the most successful riders in the country.

Japan is sticking to its combination of last year with Joki Okabe and Yutaka Take, champion jockeys in their own right, ready to provide their rivals a real surprise.

The UAE, which is the horse racing centre of the Middle East with the ruling Makum family one of the world's biggest and richest owners, will be represented by Richard Hills and John Murtagh who are currently slugging it out in the local jockeys championship.

Starks leads Knicks to another win

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan (R) — For streaky John Starks, it was a tale of two halves. While for his New York Knicks, the first half of the fourth quarter was déjà vu all over again.

Starks missed his first 10 shots and was held to two points in the first half but scored eight of his 21 points and produced a couple of key steals during a 17-0 New York run to open the fourth quarter as the revitalised Knicks pulled away for a 99-85 victory over the Detroit Pistons Monday.

The Knicks, who had used a 15-0 spurt to open the fourth quarter in beating New Jersey in their previous game Thursday, have won three straight after a season-high four-game losing streak.

The Knicks outscored Detroit 39-12 in the decisive fourth quarter as the Pistons missed their first 12 shots and did not score for the first six minutes. Joe Dumars, who paced Detroit with 21 points, was held scoreless in the fourth quarter.

The Pistons (13-45) led by as many as 16 points late in the third quarter but now have dropped seven straight.

Patrick Ewing added 21 points and 11 rebounds and Anthony Mason contributed

14 points and 14 rebounds the Knicks, who swept the season series from Detroit (4-0).

In Miami, Dee Brown scored 21 points, including a go-ahead 20-foot jumper with 1:29 remaining, to lead the Boston Celtics past the Heat 112-104, snapping Miami's franchise-record seven-game winning streak.

Brown's jumper snapped a 102-102 tie to give Boston its second straight victory following a franchise-record 13-game losing skid.

Grant Long paced Miami with 24 points and Rony Seikaly added 22 points and 14 rebounds for the Heat, who have the best road record in the Eastern Conference but are now just 500 at home.

Sherman Douglas scored 20 points and handed out 11 assists for the Celtics, who placed six players in double figures.

The Celtics, who were playing without injured centre Robert Parish, were outscored 46-29 but shot a blistering 61 per cent from the floor.

In Portland, Clifford Robinson scored 25 points and Harvey Grant and Rod Strickland added 20 apiece as the red-hot Trail Blazers trounced the Golden State Warriors 137-108.

Portland, which won for the ninth time in its last 10 games, made 57 per cent of its shots in registering its highest point total of the season.

Chris Mullin had 20 points to lead Golden State, which played without Chris Webber, who is suffering from a hip pointer.

The Warriors, who had a three-game win streak snapped, lost to the Blazers for the 10th time in their last 11 meetings.

In Milwaukee, Tony Smith, playing on the same floor where he starred for Marquette and became the school's third all-time leading scorer, posted career highs with 25 points and 10 rebounds as the Los Angeles Lakers hammered the Bucks 106-84.

Sedale Threatt added 20 points and Nick Van Exel 16 for Los Angeles while Elden Campbell netted 12 points and pulled down 10 rebounds.

The Lakers collected 17 steals, led by George Lynch's five, and forced the Bucks into 25 turnovers.

Todd Day paced Milwaukee, which never led, with 18 points, as the Bucks lost for the eighth time in 11 outings.

Vin Baker added 17 points and eight rebounds for Milwaukee, which placed just three players in double figures.

Faisali remains in lead as soccer championship goes into 16th week

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Al Ramtha play Al Yarmouk in the 91st match of the first division soccer championship as it enters its 16th week Wednesday with six weeks remaining in the most prestigious soccer competition of the country.

Titleholders Al Faisali have so far maintained their remarkable unbeaten streak and are still in the lead with 42 points after their 2-0 win over second placed Al Ahli that gave them a 13 point commanding lead atop the 12 team standings.

They will next face fourth placed Al Hussein who seem to have lost their earlier form and lately lost 3-1 to Al Qadissieh.

Al Faisali will then have relatively easier opponents like Al Jazireh, Al Baqaa, Al Yarmouk, Sahab and Al Qadissieh before they play former champions Al Wihdat in the final week of April.

Likewise, Al Wihdat seem to be determined not to let a mutiny of veteran players spoil their chances for a top-three position.

They lately beat Sahab 2-1

and moved from fifth to third place behind Al Ahli. They will next clash against 6th placed Al Qadissieh who have somewhat escaped the danger of relegation facing the last four teams.

During the second leg of the tournament, Al Qadissieh beat Al Yarmouk 6-2, Al Ahli 3-1, Al Hussein 3-1, and drew with Sahab 1-1.

Also in the upcoming week, Al Ahli will seek to defeat Al Jazireh who fell to 9th place after an unexpected 2-1 loss to newcomers Al Fubeis who climbed from last to 10th place.

Al Baqaa are now in 8th place after their astonishing 4-2 win over Al Ramtha. They will next attempt to beat Al Fubeis to consolidate their position facing Al Ahli. Al Faisali and Al Hussein in the upcoming weeks.

11th placed Sahab will have to begin scoring some wins if they intend to avoid relegation. They will next face 7th placed Al Arabi, 1-0 winners over Al Yarmouk last week.

Sahab next have some tough matches against Al Ramtha, Al Ahli, Al Hussein, and Al Faisali.

Standings prior to 16th week

Team	P	W	D	GD	L	GF	GA	Pts.
Faisali	15	13	1	1	—	38	8	42
Ahli	15	7	4	—	4	22	15	29
Wihdat	15	7	3	2	3	15	11	29
Hussein	15	6	4	2	3	22	13	28
Ramtha	15	7	2	1	5	25	18	26
Qadissieh	15	5	4	2	4	22	17	25
Arabi	15	4	4	—	7	18	29	20
Baqaa	15	5	2	1	7	14	25	20
Jazireh	15	2	6	—	7	17	21	18
Fubeis	15	4	1	1	9	10	25	15
Sahab	15	2	3	2	8	14	22	14
Yarmouk	15	4	—	2	9	13	26	14

Baggio facing 3-week lay-off

TURIN, Italy (R) — European footballer of the year Roberto Baggio of Juventus may need surgery on his knee, a club spokesman said Tuesday.

Baggio, 26, is currently the top scorer in the Italian Serie A with 16 goals.

"He will be examined later this week to determine whether he will need surgery to repair the meniscus in his right knee," said Romi Gai of Juventus. The meniscus is a crescent-shaped fibro-cartilage which acts as the knee's shock-absorber.

Baggio, whose career was nearly cut short when he underwent major surgery on the same knee nine years ago, injured the knee again last week when Juventus lost 1-0 to Cagliari in the UEFA Cup.

'E. Germany doped children to boost performance'

BERLIN (R) — Children in former East Germany were given illegal drugs to boost their performances in sport, a Berlin newspaper said Monday.

The Berliner Morgenpost quoted a German government official as saying that recently discovered documents from the East German security police (STASI) showed that child athletes under 14 had been doped in the 1970s and 1980s. The present government was preparing charges against former East German sports authorities in at least 12 cases of causing bodily harm to minors and violating pharmaceutical laws, said Manfred Kittlaus, head of the Central Office for Government and Unification Crimes (ZERV).

A Stasi report quoted in the newspaper said: "Support in the sports medicine area (is) apparently the only possibility currently available to further increase performances. This was especially apparent at the

sportakiade (children's sports festival), where even child athletes were 'fed' the report added. Kittlaus told the newspaper that in many cases children were doped without the permission of their parents and warned not to tell them. He said the ZERV knew of at least one girl who had been doped as a child and later gave birth to a deformed baby.

Despite its population of only 16 million, East Germany was one of the world's leading sporting powers before it collapsed in 1990.

A 1991 German Sports Federation (DSB) report said that nearly all East German coaches, doctors and officials were strongly suspected of having taken part in doping programmes monitored by the Stasi.

Many former East German trainers have admitted that doping was rife but said the abuse was ordered by higher officials.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Real Madrid fire coach Floro

MADRID (R) — Real Madrid Monday fired coach Benito Floro following the team's weekend defeat by first division Stragglers Lerida. Chariman Ramon Mendoza named former player and member of the technical staff Vicente Del Bosque as caretaker coach until the end of the season. The sacking of Floro, who came to Madrid from Albacete at the start of the 1992-93 season, climaxed a board meeting dedicated to discussing yet another crisis in a stormy season for Spain's most famous club. Real lost 1-0 at home to Paris Saint Germain in a European Cup Winners' Cup quarter-final first leg last Thursday and Sunday's defeat in Lerida was the final nail in Floro's coffin.

Olympic pairs champions to skip Tokyo

MOSCOW (R) — Olympic pairs skating champions Yekaterina Gordeyeva and Sergei Grinkov of Russia will skip this month's world championships in Tokyo because they are preparing to return to the professional circuit. "We are not going to the world championships later this month because we have only a month to prepare for our shows and we still haven't recovered from the Olympics," Gordeyeva told the English-language Moscow Times newspaper. "We probably won't compete in the next Olympics," she told a special edition of the newspaper dedicated to Tuesday's women's day holiday. The couple's Lillehammer title was their second Olympic gold — they won at Calgary in 1988 and then turned professional before taking advantage of new rules to return to the games.

Ray Arcel, legendary trainer, is dead

NEW YORK (R) — Ray Arcel, who trained 22 world boxing champions in a career that spanned 65 years, died Monday of leukaemia. He was 94. Arcel's first world champion was Charlie Phil Rosenberg, who won the world bantamweight championship in 1925. Among Arcel's other champions were Jack 'Kid' Berg, a Briton who won the world junior welterweight title in 1930 lightweight champion Benny Leonard, who won the title in 1917 and Roberto Duran, who captured the lightweight title in 1972. Arcel also was in Larry Holmes' corner when he retained his heavyweight title against Gerry Cooney in 1982. Even after he retired from boxing, young fighters continued to seek his advice, including Olympic champion Mark Breland and up-and-coming heavyweight Shannon Briggs.

Tyson gives up on legal system, hits the books

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — With about one year to go before his release from prison, Mike Tyson has given up on the legal system and is focusing on his education.

Tyson was convicted in February 1992 of raping beauty pageant contestant Desiree Washington while both were in Indianapolis the previous summer.

He was sentenced to six years at the Indiana Youth Centre, but his May 1993 release could be moved up by as much as six months if he passes his high school equivalency exam.

On Monday, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to review the former heavyweight boxing champ's conviction.

The court, without comment, turned away arguments Monday that Tyson, 27, was denied a fair trial.

"I doubt this will affect him. I think he sets himself up to expect the worst and is pretty

surprised when something other than that happens," said Phil Slavens, an assistant superintendent at the prison.

The Rev. Charles Williams, a close friend of Tyson's and president of the Indiana Black Expo, said he doubted Tyson would be surprised by the decision.

Tyson has matured during his two years at the prison, located west of Indianapolis in Plainfield, and spends his free time attending classes and working out, Slavens said.

"He's been pretty much on an even keel his whole stay here. As he gets relatively close to getting home his attitude is more upbeat," he said.

Tyson's attorney, Alan Dershowitz, said the denial was expected because the supreme court accepts a small fraction of the petitions it receives. Dershowitz said he will begin a federal petition requesting release from prison.

Attorneys representing



Mike Tyson

Washington said the decision proved the validity of the original verdict in Marion Superior Court.

"We're very pleased with the result, although it comes as no surprise," said Lisa Campolo, an associate of Boston Attorney Deval Patrick. Patrick is representing Washington in a civil lawsuit against Tyson in U.S. district court in Indianapolis.

Ma Junren threatens to pull out of London Marathon

BEIJING (R) — Ma Junren, China's top athletics trainer, said his elite squad of runners might not be able to take part in events in Indonesia and London next month unless money for his training centre was released, the Beijing Evening News said.

In its Monday edition, it quoted Ma as saying that the state council (cabinet) has approved one million yuan (\$115,000) for the centre but authorisation for its use has not been given.

"Unless this problem is resolved, the Ma team might not be able to take part in events in Indonesia and London," he said.

His runners are due to take part in the London Marathon April 17, a week after running a 10-kilometre road race in Bali.

But David Bedford, the international race director of the London Marathon said Tuesday he had no reason to believe the runners would not be taking part in his race.

Bedford said: "I don't envisage any problem whatsoever with the Chinese runners. They are contractually obliged to run in the race and I expect them to turn up and run."

Skating association not backing down against Harding

PORTLAND, ORE (AP) — The U.S. Figure Skating Association is showing no sign of backing down in its legal showdown with Tonya Harding.

Association officials are proceeding with plans for a hearing Thursday in Colorado Springs, Colo., on whether to throw Harding out of the sport for her alleged role in the attack on Nancy Kerrigan.

"The panel continues to believe that the hearing will be held on Thursday at 9 a.m., the panel's chairman, Bull Hybl, said. "The panel is very careful

ly following the bylaws of the United States Figure Skating Association to provide due process and a fair hearing."

Harding's lawyers, however, say it would be unfair for her to face the hearing while a criminal investigation into her role in the case is unfinished.

Unless the hearing is stopped, they say. "She will undoubtedly be found 'guilty' of violating some USFSA rule and deprived of her membership registration. That will effectively end her competitive figure skating career."

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Far And Away Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 8:30, 10:30		Amr Diyab, Yusra & Omar Sherif in Laughter, Playing, Seriousness and Love Arabic Shows: 12:30, 3, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		CONCORD '1' Demolition Man Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' Dennis the Menace Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Opening Soon A political comedy Forbidden X Forbidden		presents a play entitled: Al Ilm Nuron A popular political comedy Actors: Abeer Issa, Daoud Jalajel, Hassan Al Shaer, Fuad Shomali in addition to other comedians Every night at 8:15 Tickets are sold all day Coming soon: The next play		Nabil and Hisham Theatre presents Ahlan Arab Summit Conference (play) daily at 9:15 p.m. Theatre is closed Sundays, Monday and Tuesdays	

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran denies role in plot to kill Sedki

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran denied Tuesday Egyptian allegations that it had plotted to kill Egypt's prime minister, Atef Sedki. Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Morteza Sarmadi told Tehran's official Islamic Republic News agency that the accusations were "baseless and false." Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak said in an interview published Monday in a Kuwaiti newspaper that Iran had paid 44,000 Egyptian pounds (\$13,100) to an Egyptian plumber to finance an attack on Dr. Sedki, but that the unidentified middleman had spent the money on himself. Mr. Mubarak told the daily Al Qabas that the plumber had been arrested. IRNA, monitored in Cyprus, quoted Mr. Sarmadi as saying the accusation not only reflected "the Cairo regime's helplessness and confusion, but also the critical situation in that country." Mr. Mubarak did not say if the alleged plot was in any way connected to a failed assassination attempt on Dr. Sedki in November. The Egyptian leader, who has blamed Iran for financing Muslim fundamentalists seeking to overthrow his government, said the money for the plot had come through Afghanistan. He gave no other details, such as when the plot was uncovered.

Clinton offers greetings on Eid Al Fitr

WASHINGTON (USIA) — President Bill Clinton offered his greetings Tuesday to the world Muslim community on the occasion of Eid Al Fitr, celebrating the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan. This year's Eid Al Fitr, which most of the Islamic World will celebrate on March 12 or 13 (depending on the sighting of the moon), "reminds us of our shared responsibility to work for peace and for a better future for all the world's people — especially in the wake of the Hebron massacre," Mr. Clinton said. "In the United States, this is an occasion for us to reflect with pride on the achievements of Muslim Americans and to take satisfaction in the historic and constructive relations which we have had with Muslim countries around the world," the President added.

Mandela backs talks, but no Israeli visit

THOHOYANDOU (AP) — Nelson Mandela said Tuesday his African National Congress (ANC) supported peace talks between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) but that he was unable to visit Israel until the talks produced a peace agreement. He told a news conference he had congratulated PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli leaders Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres for launching the peace talks in a bid to end decades of conflict in the Middle East. The Israeli government invited Mr. Mandela to visit in 1992, he said, but the time was not right. "The condition for me going to Israel is that the peace agreement between Israel and the PLO would have been signed," Mr. Mandela said. Mr. Mandela has publicly embraced Mr. Arafat for the PLO's support for the ANC in its campaign against apartheid. Pro-Israeli groups have criticised Mr. Mandela's support of Mr. Arafat, but Mandela likens the Palestinian situation to that of South Africa's blacks and says the ANC will never turn its back on groups that supported it.

Last major U.S. unit leaves Somalia

MOGADISHU (R) — The last major U.S. Army combat unit to leave Somalia boarded a ship in Mogadishu bound for home Tuesday, U.S. officials said. Some 400 soldiers of the "Triple Deuce" unit of the 10th Mountain Division boarded the ship Mediterranean Sky along with 100 workers from the main American hospital. The unit was deployed in Somalia after 18 U.S. soldiers were killed in a clash with residents of Mogadishu on Oct. 3. The medical workers, from the 46th combat support hospital, tended dozens of American wounded in the aftermath of that battle. President Bill Clinton ordered all U.S. troops, who first arrived in December 1992 to save Somalia from famine, out of the country by the end of March. Several other contingents, including the Italians and Germans, also leave this month.

EU urges resumption of peace talks

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Union (EU) has said the Hebron massacre should not interrupt the Middle East peace process and called for measures to ensure the safety of Palestinians in the occupied territories. EU foreign ministers issued a statement appealing to the United Nations Security Council to swiftly adopt a resolution encouraging the resumption of peace negotiations between all parties. The EU statement welcomed measures taken by the Israeli government to ensure Palestinians' safety, but noted that Israel was responsible for the protection of all inhabitants in the occupied territories. The minister said the parties should agree on appropriate measures for the safety of Palestinians "while tackling forthwith in a constructive spirit the problem of the (Israeli settler) colonies in general." They also backed the swift establishment of an international presence, including the EU, in the territories. Greek Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias told a news conference all his colleagues agreed on the need to shore up the position of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, saying he was a vital factor in the peace process.

Schneerson hospitalised

NEW YORK (R) — Menachem Schneerson, the 91-year-old grand rabbi of the ultra-orthodox Lubavitch movement was admitted to a New York hospital early Tuesday morning in serious condition, the hospital said. "He came in at about 3:30 this morning. His condition is serious," Mary Costello, the director of public relations at the Hospital for Joint Diseases, told Reuters. "He was admitted to our neurological service. He is being evaluated by a team of neurologists," she said, adding that no diagnosis had been made. Rabbi Schneerson was brought to the hospital by ambulance from his home in Brooklyn, the world headquarters of the Lubavitch movement. Last week Rabbi Schneerson, who many of his followers believe will be revealed as the Messiah, underwent an operation to remove a cataract from one of his eyes.

Hassan II commutes 195 death sentences

RABAT (R) — Morocco's King Hassan, marking the 33rd year since his accession to the throne, has commuted the death sentences of 195 prisoners to life imprisonment, the justice ministry said Tuesday. A spokesman for the independent Morocco Human Rights Organisation (OMDH) said it appeared from their lists that all prisoners on death row had been pardoned. The spokesman said most of them were common criminals convicted of murder. They also include 11 Muslim fundamentalists convicted of smuggling in arms and plotting a terrorist campaign. The last person to be sentenced to death and executed, on Aug. 9, was Chief Police Commissioner Mohammed Mustapha Tabit convicted of multiple rape and sexual violence in sex orgies he staged in his Casablanca apartment.

Nirvana star Cobain leaves hospital

ROME (R) — Kurt Cobain, lead singer and guitarist with American "Grunge" rock band Nirvana, left hospital on Tuesday four days after he was admitted in a coma induced by alcohol and drugs. Rome's American Hospital said Mr. Cobain, 27, was in good health. He left the hospital accompanied by his wife Courtney Love but it was not clear whether the couple had remained in Rome. Mr. Cobain, an idol for millions of young fans worldwide, was rushed to the hospital on Friday after falling ill at a luxury hotel where he, Mr. Love and two-year-old daughter Frances Bean had been staying between dates on the group's European tour. The rock star has a history of drug problems.



BRUTALITY: An Israeli soldier kicks a Palestinian in the back during clashes in Arab East Jerusalem on Tuesday following a march marking International Women's Day (AFP photo)

Hundreds of rockets pound Kabul; at least 18 killed

KABUL (AP) — Factions on Kabul's outskirts fired hundreds of rockets into the besieged city Tuesday in one of the most intense assaults since heavy fighting began Jan. 1. President Burhanuddin Rabbani's Defence Ministry in the city centre and civilian neighbourhoods in northwest Kabul were both targeted in a barrage that began Monday afternoon and carried on throughout the day Tuesday.

At least 18 people were killed and more than 100 wounded, according to hospital workers. But the actual toll is higher, because many of the injured are unable to reach hospitals and families often bury their dead immediately. Also, the fierce fighting heightened fears that Kabul's worsening food shortages could soon lead to famine among the tens of thousands of residents completely dependent on dwindling food handouts.

At least 70 rockets crashed in and around the Defence Ministry complex in central Kabul, said Humayun Aiani, one of the few officials still working in the badly damaged buildings. Puffs of black smoke rose into the air and the surrounding streets were almost completely deserted. Mr. Rabbani's forces hold the presidential palace, the Defence Ministry, the airport and other key locations in the capital. But his rivals, Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and warlord Rashid Dostum, are dug in on the city's edge and have been pounding Kabul with rockets since they launched their assault on New Year's Day.

Many residents said the latest fighting was as heavy as anything they had experienced in the past nine weeks. It appeared Mr. Hekmatyar's and General Dostum's forces were doing most of the firing Tuesday, while the president's side was content to hold its ground.

"The government is in a defensive position," said Mr. Aiani. In addition to the rocketing, Gen. Dostum's forces launched an infantry assault on the eastern side of town, but they were repulsed by the president's troops, according to Mr. Aiani. However, rockets continued to slam into the eastern part of the city even as Mr. Aiani spoke.

Many of the rockets targeted neighbourhoods in northwest Kabul, where hundreds of thousands of residents have congregated to escape the main battle zones on the southern and eastern edges of the battered city. In perhaps the worst single attack, several rockets landed near a mosque where food was being distributed Monday afternoon, killing six and wounding 30 in northwest Kabul.

The front lines have hardly changed since the fighting began, and soldiers on both sides are entrenched in well-fortified positions. The vast majority of the casualties are civilians who must venture onto the streets to buy food and to collect firewood needed to survive the cold nights in a city without electricity.

At least 1,000 people have been killed and more than 12,000 wounded since the beginning of the year, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Training plane crashes in New Delhi, 6 killed

NEW DELHI (Agencies) — A Boeing 737 on a training flight for a private airline collided with a parked Russian Aeroflot jetliner Tuesday and both planes burst into flames. Officials said six people were killed. The Ilyushin lay collapsed on its belly, its nose broken and the fuselage totally charred. A wrecked car had crashed into a light tower and caught fire.

Mr. Arya said five of the dead were found on the airport tarmac. Police and airline sources said about four people including three Russian crew were aboard the Ilyushin at the time of the crash and four on the Boeing, three of them trainees. Aeroflot officials said their plane was being serviced after an engine problem prevented it from leaving Delhi for Moscow on Monday.

At least one of the five injured was Russian, Mr. Arya said. Airport officials said two local catering workers on the ground were also among those hurt. The scene had not yet been fully searched and more bodies might be found, officials said. It was not immediately clear what caused the accident or what fell from the Sahara plane before it crashed.

Police said they may find more corpses in the small, Victorian terrace home, in Gloucester, western England, and plan to extend their search to four other sites in the area. Some officers said the body toll would reach double figures, perhaps Britain's biggest mass killing.

Police, who have charged a man with three counts of murder, say some of the remains could be more than two decades old.

A 52-year-old builder, Frederick West, has been charged with three murders, including that of his 16-year-old daughter Heather, and is being held pending another hearing on Friday.

Sounds of drilling echoed through the once-quiet neighbourhood where Mr. West lived with his second wife and some of their 10 children. Police dumped blocks of concrete in the back garden, where three of the bodies were found.

Heavy equipment was brought in to fill in the garden as searchers concentrated on



Firemen douse a charred Russian Aeroflot jetliner after a commercial Indian jetliner on a training flight crashed into it on Tuesday at the Delhi (AFP photo)

Police find 8th body entombed in Gloucester 'house of horror'

GLOUCESTER, England (Agencies) — Police on a mass-murder hunt said Tuesday they had unearthed an eighth body in Britain's "house of horror" — a suburban home apparently yielding grim secrets of serial killing.

Police say they may find more corpses in the small, Victorian terrace home, in Gloucester, western England, and plan to extend their search to four other sites in the area. Some officers said the body toll would reach double figures, perhaps Britain's biggest mass killing.

Police, who have charged a man with three counts of murder, say some of the remains could be more than two decades old. This brings the total that we have now found to eight.

Police say privately at least 12 bodies may be found and there is speculation the toll could rise even higher. A 52-year-old builder, Frederick West, has been charged with three murders, including that of his 16-year-old daughter Heather, and is being held pending another hearing on Friday.

Sounds of drilling echoed through the once-quiet neighbourhood where Mr. West lived with his second wife and some of their 10 children. Police dumped blocks of concrete in the back garden, where three of the bodies were found.

Heavy equipment was brought in to fill in the garden as searchers concentrated on

Dennis Nilson was jailed for

One in four men in settlements has guns

By Gwen Ackerman
The Associated Press

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — Amid the heated debate over disarming Jewish settlers in the occupied territories in the aftermath of the Hebron mosque massacre, the big question is: What sort of firepower do they have?

Left-wing legislator Ran Cohen, a leading advocate of disarmament, estimated they have around 10,000 automatic weapons such as M-16 rifles, Galil assault rifles and Uzi submachine guns — not counting tens of thousands of handguns. The Yedioth Ahronoth daily said the number could be as high as 20,000 automatic weapons among the roughly 35,000 settler households in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

That would average out at one in four male settlers are armed with the kind of weapon that settler Baruch Goldstein used.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) — backed by Syria, Lebanon and Jordan — has suspended peace talks with Israel until steps are taken to protect the two million Palestinians in the occupied territories, such as disarming the settlers or removing militant settlements.

They say that the Hebron massacre may be repeated by radical settlers who oppose the peace process.

Israelis are divided over whether the settlers, heavily outnumbered by the Palestinians, should be disarmed.

Opponents point to the weapons in Palestinian hands — and calls by militants to avenge Hebron.

Settlers' spokesman Aharon Domb said the idea of disarming his people was "nonsense" and would leave them defenceless against Arab attackers.

Israeli officials say the military Palestinian factions have only a few hundred automatic rifles, pistols and hand grenades. But Palestinians also have thousands of old weapons retrieved from Middle East battlefields over the years.

The Israeli military allows reserve officers living in the occupied territories to take home their army-assigned weapons.

Military sources said the army also gives automatic

weapons to civilians who can prove they have to travel through dangerous areas and who meet medical and police criteria.

In addition, the settlers' council says there are 1,000 men in a special emergency unit to protect settlements who are allowed to carry automatic weapons.

Avi Elimelech, head of the interior ministry's gun permit department, said that 300,000 Israelis are licensed to keep handguns.

But he refused to say how many settlers were included in that total.

Mr. Cohen, a reserve colonel, said extremists who are banned from holding weapons can also get guns illegally.

The territories are flooded with weapons and ammunition and therefore the ability to steal is high," said Mr. Cohen, a member of parliament's foreign affairs and defence committee.

"They can easily mix in with the army and steal from them with relative ease."

"In theory, the weapons they have are for self-defence, but they're used in attacks (on Arabs) and killing. The proof is what happened in Hebron," Mr. Cohen said.

He wants to ban automatic weapons for all Israelis in the territories except soldiers, police officers and security men on active duty. Settlers can be given pistols for self-defence, he said.

But Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's spokesman, Oded Ben-Ami, said the government was not even considering taking away the settlers' weapons.

"We're not discussing it because the whole reason for arming them is for self-defence and protection," he said.

Zeev Eytan, a military expert from the Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies, said that despite their arsenal of firearms, the settlers were not a military power.

Taking away their weapons would be counter-productive, he said, since the army allows settlers serving in the military to take guns home so they can deploy quickly if mobilised.

"You don't go out to fight the Syrian army with pistols," Mr. Eytan said.

But he conceded that "for trouble-making, for killing a few Arabs... that can be done with pistols."

COLUMN

Minister admits indiscretion in Dublin park

DUBLIN (R) — An Irish government minister admitted "indiscreet conduct" after being questioned over a kerb-side conversation in a Dublin park with a suspected male prostitute. Emmett Stagg, minister of state in the environment department, issued a statement identifying himself as the mysterious government figure police said they had questioned about the incident last November. His statement capped months of rumours and press reports about a government figure reported to have been questioned about an incident involving a male prostitute in Phoenix Park on the capital's eastern limits. "I accept my conduct was undoubtedly indiscreet. I wish to make it clear it was not illegal. I deeply regret my conduct, which has clearly harmed many whom I love and respect," said Mr. Stagg, a member of the Labour Party. Prime Minister Albert Reynolds issued a brief statement saying it was a personal tragedy and "a time for charity and restraint." Police acknowledged at the weekend rumours circulating since last November that they had questioned a senior politician found in his car with a suspected male prostitute. They said no charges were being brought and no offence had been committed.

Charles lost treasured heirlooms in burglary

LONDON (R) — Police said a robber who broke into Prince Charles's apartments got away with several pairs of cufflinks, four pens, two watches and five tiepins but selling them would be like hawking the Mona Lisa. Police and Buckingham Palace officials had earlier refused to give details of the embarrassing robbery on Feb. 24 at the heir-to-the-throne's residence at St. James's Palace in central London that was a major security breach. Police hope that releasing the list of historic and dazzling heirlooms along with photographs of them will help net the thief but one official at Scotland Yard Police Headquarters said: "It would be a bit like trying to sell the Mona Lisa." The items included gold cufflinks encrusted with rose diamonds; sapphires and rubies made by Faberge and once owned by the last tsar of Russia, given to him at his christening by Prince Ludwig of Hess, and a similar pair bought by the prince. The thief, thought to have climbed through a window after scaling building scaffolding, also took a pair of black cufflinks in onyx and diamonds, set in platinum and bearing the cypher of King George VI, a gift from his grandmother. There is also a gold pocket watch, engraved with his coat of arms and the message "your loving sister," given on his 21st birthday by Princess Anne. The other sports watch is engraved "Charles from his godmother Patricia." It is not known how much the heirlooms are worth.

Deng is healthy, daughter says

TOKYO (R) — China's senior leader Deng Xiaoping is in good health and walks about three kilometres each day, one of his daughters said Tuesday. "At the moment (Deng) has no disease. He takes a walk for three kilometres every day, in Beijing's cold wind," Deng Rong, third daughter of the 89-year-old leader, told reporters in Tokyo. Mr. Deng, now officially retired, is rarely seen in public. Television showed him looking very frail when he appeared in Shanghai last month for a Chinese New Year festival. Yet he is still believed to have the last word in framing key policy, as China follows his exhortations to shake up its communist economy and press ahead with market reforms. Deng Rong, in Japan to publicise her biography of the old revolutionary, indicated that he now left routine decision-making entirely to his protégés — President Jiang Zemin, Prime Minister Li Peng and economic supremo Zhu Rongji. "The three of them rarely come to see him. But on important matters they seek his advice," she added.

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